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# NORMS FOR LITURGICAL MUSIC IN THE MASS

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Compiled by Rev. Jeffrey H. Moore from publicly available sources



AUGUST 2, 2022

# Praenotanda

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assemble in one place all the important instructions on liturgical music issued by authorities in the Church, either currently binding or providing historical insight and context.

This document is intended to be referenced by all whose office requires stewardship of the liturgy, most especially priests and choir directors.

For the sake of keeping focused an already expansive collection, only those sections of these documents which touch upon the Mass were reproduced, and even then, certain repetitions were excluded.

## Organization

There are two general ways to organize instructional documents: chronologically or hierarchically. The chronological approach is helpful in understanding the development of thought over time and was strongly considered for this collection; however, this collection is primarily intended to be a practical aid in liturgical planning, so the hierarchical approach was favored so that the most binding and pressing documents would be approached first, with the less binding documents still available to supplement what may not be completely fleshed in the former.

The documents are organized according to the following categories:

1. Dogmatic – encyclicals originating from a council or intended as a theological instruction.
2. Instructional – instructions touching on the implementation of the dogmatic documents. These are still binding and must be adhered to.
3. Clarifying – non-binding documents from ecclesiastical authorities that seek to provide guidance on how to implement the dogmatic and instructional documents.
4. Historical – documents that were written before the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council but which show the emergence of the liturgical reform movement and the continuity of pre-conciliar and post-conciliar thought.

## Public Use

Every document in this collection is taken from a publicly available source, and these sources are all noted in the appendix. It is my understanding that the authors and translators intended for these documents to be widely shared, for the good of the Church, but should they object to their translation being included here, I will remove it immediately until another translation can be found in the public domain.

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# Dogmatic Documents

# Sacrosanctum Concilium (1963)

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*Sacrosanctum Concilium is the Second Vatican Council's constitution on the liturgy. As such, it is the most authoritative of all modern liturgical texts. However, though primary, it does not stand alone, but assumes many of the documents immediately preceding it and is clarified by documents that come after it.*

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## Chapter I - General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy

### III. The Reform of the Sacred Liturgy

#### *B) Norms drawn from the hierarchic and communal nature of the Liturgy*

28. In liturgical celebrations each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy.

30. To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.

#### *C) Norms based upon the didactic and pastoral nature of the Liturgy*

36. (1) Particular law remaining in force, the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.

(2) But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants, according to the regulations on this matter to be laid down separately in subsequent chapters.

(3) These norms being observed, it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned in Art. 22, 2, to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used; their decrees are to be approved, that is, confirmed, by the Apostolic See. And, whenever it seems to be called for, this authority is to consult with bishops of neighboring regions which have the same language.

(4) Translations from the Latin text into the mother tongue intended for use in the liturgy must be approved by the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned above.

## Chapter II - The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist

54. In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and "the common prayer," but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those parts which pertain to the people, according to the norm laid down in Art. 36 of this Constitution.

Nevertheless steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.

And wherever a more extended use of the mother tongue within the Mass appears desirable, the regulation laid down in Art. 40 of this Constitution is to be observed.

## Chapter VI - Sacred Music

112. The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.

Holy Scripture, indeed, has bestowed praise upon sacred song, and the same may be said of the fathers of the Church and of the Roman pontiffs who in recent times, led by St. Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial function supplied by sacred music in the service of the Lord.

Therefore sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. But the Church approves of all forms of true art having the needed qualities, and admits them into divine worship.

Accordingly, the sacred Council, keeping to the norms and precepts of ecclesiastical tradition and discipline, and having regard to the purpose of sacred music, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful, decrees as follows.

113. Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people.

As regards the language to be used, the provisions of Art. 36 are to be observed; for the Mass, Art. 54; for the sacraments, Art. 63; for the divine office. Art. 101.

114. The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted, especially in cathedral churches; but bishops and other pastors of souls must be at pains to ensure that, whenever the sacred action is to be celebrated with song, the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs, as laid down in Art. 28 and 30.

115. Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and

schools. To impart this instruction, teachers are to be carefully trained and put in charge of the teaching of sacred music.

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

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

116. The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.

But other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action, as laid down in Art. 30.

117. The typical edition of the books of Gregorian chant is to be completed; and a more critical edition is to be prepared of those books already published since the restoration by St. Pius X.

It is desirable also that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies, for use in small churches.

118. Religious singing by the people is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises, as also during liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may ring out according to the norms and requirements of the rubrics.

119. In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius, as indicated in Art. 39 and 40.

Therefore, when missionaries are being given training in music, every effort should be made to see that they become competent in promoting the traditional music of these peoples, both in schools and in sacred services, as far as may be practicable.

120. In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.

But other instruments also may be admitted for use in divine worship, with the knowledge and consent of the competent territorial authority, as laid down in Art. 22, 52, 37, and 40. This may be done, however, only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.

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

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

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

# Chirograph of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio “Tra Le Sollecitudini” on Sacred Music (2003)

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*It is a common practice for Popes to use the anniversary of an important document as an occasion to bring renewed attention to said document and to advance its teachings for the present day. This is exactly what Pope John II did in 2003, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Pius X's document Tra Le Sollecitudini.*

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1. Motivated by a strong desire "to maintain and promote the decorum of the House of God", my Predecessor St Pius X promulgated the Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini* 100 years ago. Its purpose was to renew sacred music during liturgical services. With it he intended to offer the Church practical guidelines in that vital sector of the Liturgy, presenting them, as it were, as a "juridical code of sacred music"[1]. This act was also part of the programme of his Pontificate which he summed up in the motto: "*Instaurare omnia in Cristo*".

The centenary of the Document gives me the opportunity to recall the important role of sacred music, which St Pius X presented both as a means of lifting up the spirit to God and as a precious aid for the faithful in their "active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church"[2].

The holy Pontiff recalls that the special attention which sacred music rightly deserves stems from the fact that, "being an integral part of the solemn Liturgy, [it] participates in the general purpose of the Liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful"[3]. Since it interprets and expresses the deep meaning of the sacred text to which it is intimately linked, it must be able "to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be... better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries"[4].

2. The Second Vatican Council followed up this approach in chapter VI of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Sacred Liturgy, in which the ecclesial role of sacred music is clearly defined: "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred melody united to words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn Liturgy"[5]. The Council also recalls that "Sacred Scripture, indeed, has bestowed praise upon sacred song. So have the Fathers of the Church and the Roman

Pontiffs who in more recent times, led by St Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial function exercised by sacred music in the service of the Lord"[6].

In fact, by continuing the ancient biblical tradition to which the Lord himself and the Apostles abided (cf. Mt 26: 30; Eph 5: 19; Col 3: 16), the Church has encouraged song at liturgical celebrations throughout her history, providing wonderful examples of melodic comment to the sacred texts in accordance with the creativity of every culture, in the rites of both West and East.

The attention my Predecessors thus paid to this delicate sector was constant. They recalled the fundamental principles that must enliven the composition of sacred music, especially when it is destined for the Liturgy. Besides Pope St Pius X, other Popes who deserve mention are Benedict XIV with his Encyclical *Annus Qui* (19 February 1749), Pius XII with his Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (20 November 1947) and *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina* (25 December 1955), and lastly Paul VI, with the luminous statements that punctuated many of his Speeches.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council did not fail to reassert these principles with a view to their application in the changed conditions of the times. They did so specifically in chapter six of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Pope Paul VI then saw that those principles were translated into concrete norms, in particular with the Instruction *Musicam Sacram*, promulgated on 5 March 1967 with his approval by the Congregation then known as the Sacred Congregation for Rites. In this same context, it is necessary to refer to those principles of conciliar inspiration to encourage a development in conformity with the requirements of liturgical reform and which will measure up to the liturgical and musical tradition of the Church. The text of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in which it is declared that the Church "approves of all forms of true art which have the requisite qualities[7], and admits them into divine worship", finds satisfactory criteria for application in nn. 50-53 of the above-mentioned Instruction *Musicam Sacram*[8].

3. On various occasions I too have recalled the precious role and great importance of music and song for a more active and intense participation in liturgical celebrations[9]. I have also stressed the need to "purify worship from ugliness of style, from distasteful forms of expression, from uninspired musical texts which are not worthy of the great act that is being celebrated"[10], to guarantee dignity and excellence to liturgical compositions.

In this perspective, in the light of the Magisterium of St Pius X and my other Predecessors and taking into account in particular the pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council, I would like to re-propose several fundamental principles for this important sector of the life of the Church, with the intention of ensuring that liturgical music corresponds ever more closely to its specific function.

4. In continuity with the teachings of St Pius X and the Second Vatican Council, it is necessary first of all to emphasize that music destined for sacred rites must have *holiness* as its reference point: indeed, "sacred music increases in holiness to the degree that it is intimately linked with liturgical action"[11]. For this very reason, "not all without distinction that is outside the temple (*profanum*) is fit to cross its threshold", my venerable Predecessor Paul VI wisely said, commenting on a Decree of the Council of Trent[12]. And he explained that "if music - instrumental and vocal - does not possess at the same time the sense of prayer, dignity and beauty, it precludes the entry into the sphere of the sacred and the religious"[13]. Today, moreover, the meaning of the category "sacred music" has been broadened to

include repertoires that cannot be part of the celebration without violating the spirit and norms of the Liturgy itself.

St Pius X's reform aimed specifically at purifying Church music from the contamination of profane theatrical music that in many countries had polluted the repertoire and musical praxis of the Liturgy. In our day too, careful thought, as I emphasized in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, should be given to the fact that not all the expressions of figurative art or of music are able "to express adequately the mystery grasped in the fullness of the Church's faith"[14]. Consequently, not all forms of music can be considered suitable for liturgical celebrations.

5. Another principle, affirmed by St Pius X in the Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini* and which is closely connected with the previous one, is that of *sound form*. There can be no music composed for the celebration of sacred rites which is not first of all "true art" or which does not have that efficacy "which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her Liturgy the art of musical sounds"[15].

Yet this quality alone does not suffice. Indeed, liturgical music must meet the specific prerequisites of the Liturgy: full adherence to the text it presents, synchronization with the time and moment in the Liturgy for which it is intended, appropriately reflecting the gestures proposed by the rite. The various moments in the Liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God's marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorrow for the experience of human suffering which, however, faith opens to the prospect of Christian hope.

6. The music and song requested by the liturgical reform - it is right to stress this point - must comply with the legitimate demands of adaptation and inculturation. It is clear, however, that any innovation in this sensitive matter must respect specific criteria such as the search for musical expressions which respond to the necessary involvement of the entire assembly in the celebration and which, at the same time, avoid any concessions to frivolity or superficiality. Likewise, on the whole, those elitist forms of "inculturation" which introduce into the Liturgy ancient or contemporary compositions of possible artistic value, but that indulge in a language that is incomprehensible to the majority, should be avoided.

In this regard St Pius X pointed out - using the term *universal* - a further prerequisite of music destined for worship: "...while every nation", he noted, "is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinate in such a manner to the general character of sacred music, that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them"[16]. In other words, the sacred context of the celebration must never become a laboratory for experimentation or permit forms of composition and performance to be introduced without careful review.

7. Among the musical expressions that correspond best with the qualities demanded by the notion of sacred music, especially liturgical music, Gregorian chant has a special place. The Second Vatican Council recognized that "being specially suited to the Roman Liturgy"[17] it should be given, other things being equal, pride of place in liturgical services sung in Latin[18]. St Pius X pointed out that the Church had "inherited it from the Fathers of the Church", that she has "jealously guarded [it] for centuries in her liturgical codices" and still "proposes it to the faithful" as her own, considering it "the supreme model of sacred music"[19]. Thus, Gregorian chant continues also today to be an element of unity in the Roman Liturgy.

Like St Pius X, the Second Vatican Council also recognized that "other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations"[20]. It is therefore necessary to pay special attention to the new musical expressions to ascertain whether they too can express the inexhaustible riches of the Mystery proposed in the Liturgy and thereby encourage the active participation of the faithful in celebrations[21].

8. The importance of preserving and increasing the centuries-old patrimony of the Church spurs us to take into particular consideration a specific exhortation of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: "Choirs must be assiduously developed, especially in cathedral churches"[22]. In turn, the Instruction *Musicam Sacram* explains the ministerial task of the *choir*: "Because of the liturgical ministry it exercises, the choir (*cappella musicale* or *schola cantorum*) should be mentioned here explicitly. The conciliar norms regarding the reform of the Liturgy have given the choir's function greater prominence and importance. The choir is responsible for the correct performance of its part, according to the differing types of song, to help the faithful to take an active part in the singing. Therefore,... choirs are to be developed with great care, especially in cathedrals and other major churches, in seminaries and in religious houses of study"[23]. The *schola cantorum*'s task has not disappeared: indeed, it plays a role of guidance and support in the assembly and, at certain moments in the Liturgy, has a specific role of its own.

From the smooth coordination of all - the priest celebrant and the deacon, the acolytes, the altar servers, the readers, the psalmist, the *schola cantorum*, the musicians, the cantor and the assembly - flows the proper spiritual atmosphere which makes the liturgical moment truly intense, shared in and fruitful. The musical aspect of liturgical celebrations cannot, therefore, be left to improvisation or to the arbitration of individuals but must be well conducted and rehearsed in accordance with the norms and competencies resulting from a satisfactory liturgical formation.

9. In this area, therefore, the urgent need to encourage the sound formation of both pastors and the lay faithful also comes to the fore. St Pius X insisted in particular on the musical training of clerics. The Second Vatican Council also recalled in this regard: "Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiate houses of studies of Religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and schools"[24]. This instruction has yet to be fully implemented. I therefore consider it appropriate to recall it, so that future pastors may acquire sufficient sensitivity also in this field.

In the task of training, a special role is played by schools of sacred music, which St Pius X urged people to support and encourage[25] and which the Second Vatican Council recommended be set up wherever possible[26]. A concrete result of the reform of St Pius X was the establishment in Rome in 1911, eight years after the *Motu Proprio*, of the "Pontificia Scuola Superiore di Musica Sacra" (Pontifical School for Advanced Studies in Sacred Music), which later became the "Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra" (Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music). As well as this academic institution, which has now existed for almost a century and has rendered a high-quality service to the Church, the particular Churches have established many other schools that deserve to be supported and reinforced by an ever better knowledge and performance of good liturgical music.

10. Since the Church has always recognized and fostered progress in the arts, it should not come as a surprise that in addition to Gregorian chant and polyphony she admits into celebrations even the most modern music, as long as it respects both the liturgical spirit and the true values of this art form. In

compositions written for divine worship, therefore, the particular Churches in the various nations are permitted to make the most of "those special forms which may be said to constitute the special character of [their] native music"[27]. On the lines of my holy Predecessor and of what has been decreed more recently by the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*[28], I have also intended in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* to make room for new musical contributions, mentioning in addition to the inspired Gregorian melodies, "the many, often great composers who sought to do justice to the liturgical texts of the Mass"[29].

11. The last century, with the renewal introduced by the Second Vatican Council, witnessed a special development in popular religious song, about which *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says: "Religious singing by the faithful is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises as well as in liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may be heard..."[30]. This singing is particularly suited to the participation of the faithful, not only for devotional practices "in conformity with the norms and requirements of the rubrics"[31], but also with the Liturgy itself. Popular singing, in fact, constitutes "a bond of unity and a joyful expression of the community at prayer, fosters the proclamation of the one faith and imparts to large liturgical assemblies an incomparable and recollected solemnity"[32].

12. With regard to compositions of liturgical music, I make my own the "general rule" that St Pius X formulated in these words: "The more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savour the Gregorian melodic form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple"[33]. It is not, of course, a question of imitating Gregorian chant but rather of ensuring that new compositions are imbued with the same spirit that inspired and little by little came to shape it. Only an artist who is profoundly steeped in the *sensus Ecclesiae* can attempt to perceive and express in melody the truth of the Mystery that is celebrated in the Liturgy[34]. In this perspective, in my Letter to Artists I wrote: "How many sacred works have been composed through the centuries by people deeply imbued with the sense of mystery! The faith of countless believers has been nourished by melodies flowing from the hearts of other believers, either introduced into the Liturgy or used as an aid to dignified worship. In song, faith is experienced as vibrant joy, love and confident expectation of the saving intervention of God"[35].

Renewed and deeper thought about the principles that must be the basis of the formation and dissemination of a high-quality repertoire is therefore required. Only in this way will musical expression be granted to serve appropriately its ultimate aim, which is "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful"[36].

I know well that also today there are numerous composers who are capable of making their indispensable contribution in this spirit, increasing with their competent collaboration the patrimony of music at the service of a Liturgy lived ever more intensely. To them I express my confidence, together with the most cordial exhortation to put their every effort into increasing the repertoire of compositions worthy of the exalted nature of the mysteries celebrated and, at the same time, suited to contemporary sensibilities.

13. Lastly, I would like to recall what St Pius X disposed at the practical level so as to encourage the effective application of the instructions set out in his *Motu Proprio*. Addressing the Bishops, he prescribed that they institute in their Dioceses "a special Commission of qualified persons competent in sacred music"[37]. Wherever the papal disposition was put into practice, it has yielded abundant fruit. At the present time there are numerous national, diocesan and interdiocesan commissions which make

a precious contribution to preparing local repertoires, seeking to practise a discernment that takes into account the quality of the texts and music. I hope that the Bishops will continue to support the commitment of these commissions and encourage their effectiveness in the pastoral context[38].

In the light of the experience gained in recent years, the better to assure the fulfilment of the important task of regulating and promoting the sacred Liturgy, I ask the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to increase its attention, in accordance with its institutional aims[39], in the sector of sacred liturgical music, availing itself of the competencies of the various commissions and institutions specialized in this field as well as of the contribution of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music. Indeed, it is important that the musical compositions used for liturgical celebrations correspond to the criteria appropriately set down by St Pius X and wisely developed by both the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent Magisterium of the Church. In this perspective, I am confident that the Bishops' Conferences will carefully examine texts destined for liturgical chant[40] and will devote special attention to evaluating and encouraging melodies that are truly suited to sacred use[41].

14. Again at the practical level, the Motu Proprio whose centenary it is also deals with the question of the musical instruments to be used in the Latin Liturgy. Among these, it recognizes without hesitation the prevalence of the pipe organ and establishes appropriate norms for its use[42]. The Second Vatican Council fully accepted my holy Predecessor's approach, decreeing: "The pipe organ is to be held in high esteem in the Latin Church, for it is the traditional musical instrument, the sound of which can add a wonderful splendour to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up people's minds to God and to higher things"[43].

Nonetheless, it should be noted that contemporary compositions often use a diversity of musical forms that have a certain dignity of their own. To the extent that they are helpful to the prayer of the Church they can prove a precious enrichment. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that instruments are suitable for sacred use, that they are fitting for the dignity of the Church and can accompany the singing of the faithful and serve to edify them.

15. I hope that the centenary commemoration of the Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, through the intercession of their holy Author together with that of St Cecilia, patroness of sacred music, may be an encouragement and incentive to those who are involved in this important aspect of liturgical celebrations. Sacred music lovers, by dedicating themselves with renewed impetus to a sector of such vital importance, will contribute to the spiritual growth of the People of God. The faithful, for their part, in expressing their faith harmoniously and solemnly in song, will experience its richness ever more fully and will abide by the commitment to express its impulses in their daily life. In this way, through the unanimous agreement of pastors of souls, musicians and faithful, it will be possible to achieve what the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* describes as the true "purpose of sacred music", that is, "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful"[44].

May your example and model in this be the Virgin Mary, whose praise in the *Magnificat* of the marvels God works in human history remains beyond compare. With this hope, I impart my Blessing to everyone with affection.

*Given in Rome at St Peter's on 22 November, the Memorial of St Cecilia, in the year 2003, the 26th of the Pontificate*

## Notes

- [1] *Pii X Pontificis Maximi Acta*, Vol. I, p. 77.
- [2] *Ibid.*
- [3] *Ibid.*, n. 1, p. 78.
- [4] *Ibid.*
- [5] *Ibid.*, n. 112.
- [6] *Ibid.*
- [7] *Ibid.*
- [8] Cf. AAS 59 (1967), 314-316.
- [9] Cf. e.g., *Address to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music for its 90th Anniversary* (19 January 2001), 1: *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition [ORE], 7 February 2001, p. 7.
- [10] *General Audience*, 26 February 2003, n. 3: [ORE], 5 March 2003, p. 11.
- [11] Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 112.
- [12] *Address to the Participants in the General Assembly of the Italian Association Santa Cecilia* (18 September 1968): *Insegnamenti VI* (1968), 479.
- [13] *Ibid.*
- [14] *Ibid.*, n. 50: AAS 95 (2003), 467.
- [15] *Ibid.*, n. 2, p. 78.
- [16] *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.
- [17] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 116.
- [18] Cf. Sacred Congregation for Rites, Instruction on Music in the Sacred Liturgy *Musicam Sacram* (5 March 1967), 50: AAS 59 (1967), 314.
- [19] Moto Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, n. 3, p. 79.
- [20] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 116.
- [21] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 30.
- [22] *Ibid.*, n. 114.
- [23] *Ibid.*, n. 19: AAS 59 (1967), 306.
- [24] Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 115.
- [25] Cf. Moto Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, n. 28, p. 86.
- [26] Cf. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 115.
- [27] Pius X, Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, n. 2, p. 79.
- [28] Cf. n. 119.
- [29] N. 49: AAS 95 (2003), 466.
- [30] N. 118.
- [31] *Ibid.*
- [32] John Paul II, *Address to the International Congress on Sacred Music* (27 January 2001), n. 4: ORE, 7 February 2001, p. 4.
- [33] Moto Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, n. 3, p. 79.
- [34] Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 112.

- [35] N. 12: *Insegnamenti* XXII/1 (1999), 718.
- [36] Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 112.
- [37] Moto Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudine*, n. 24, p. 85.
- [38] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus* (4 December 1987), n. 20: *AAS* 81 (1989), 916.
- [39] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (28 June 1988), 65: *AAS* 80 (1988), 877.
- [40] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dies Domini* (31 May 1998), 50: *AAS* 90 (1988), 745; Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* (28 March 2001), 108: *AAS* 93 (2001), 719.
- [41] Cf. *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, editio typica III, 393.
- [42] Cf. Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, nn. 15-18, p. 84.
- [43] Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 120.
- [44] *Ibid.*, n. 112.

# Instructional Documents

# Musicam Sacram (1967)

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*After the promulgation of Sacrosanctum Concilium, the Vatican has routinely issued instructions intended to clarify the Liturgical Constitution and provide guidance in its implementation; Musicam Sacram was the first of these instructions. Though more than half a century old, this document remains the primary governing document on liturgical music and has not been superseded by any later instruction. Note especially #3 of this document, indicating that it intends to build on even pre-conciliar documents, of which two are cited in the footnotes: Tra le sollecitudini (1903) and De Musica Sacra (1958).*

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## Preface

1. Sacred music, in those aspects which concern the liturgical renewal, was carefully considered by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. It explained its role in divine services, issued a number of principles and laws on this subject in the Constitution on the Liturgy, and devoted to it an entire chapter of the same Constitution.
2. The decisions of the Council have already begun to be put into effect in the recently undertaken liturgical renewal. But the new norms concerning the arrangement of the sacred rites and the active participation of the faithful have given rise to several problems regarding sacred music and its ministerial role. These problems appear to be able to be solved by expounding more fully certain relevant principles of the Constitution on the Liturgy.
3. Therefore the Consilium set up to implement the Constitution on the Liturgy, on the instructions of the Holy Father, has carefully considered these questions and prepared the present Instruction. This does not, however, gather together all the legislation on sacred music; it only establishes the principal norms which seem to be more necessary for our own day. It is, as it were, a continuation and complement of the preceding Instruction of this Sacred Congregation, prepared by this same Consilium on 26 September 1964, for the correct implementation of the Liturgy Constitution.
4. It is to be hoped that pastors of souls, musicians and the faithful will gladly accept these norms and put them into practice, uniting their efforts to attain the true purpose of sacred music, "which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful."<sup>[1]</sup>
  - (a) By sacred music is understood that which, being created for the celebration of divine worship, is endowed with a certain holy sincerity of form.<sup>[2]</sup>
  - (b) The following come under the title of sacred music here: Gregorian chant, sacred polyphony in its various forms both ancient and modern, sacred music for the organ and other approved instruments, and sacred popular music, be it liturgical or simply religious.<sup>[3]</sup>

## I. Some General Norms

5. Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when it is celebrated in song, with the ministers of each degree fulfilling their ministry and the people participating in it.[4]

Indeed, through this form, prayer is expressed in a more attractive way, the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown, the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices, minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites, and the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem.

Pastors of souls will therefore do all they can to achieve this form of celebration.

They will try to work out how that assignment of different parts to be performed and duties to be fulfilled, which characterizes sung celebrations, may be transferred even to celebrations which are not sung, but at which the people are present. Above all one must take particular care that the necessary ministers are obtained and that these are suitable, and that the active participation of the people is encouraged.

The practical preparation for each liturgical celebration should be done in a spirit of cooperation by all parties concerned, under the guidance of the rector of the church, whether it be in ritual, pastoral or musical matters.

6. The proper arrangement of a liturgical celebration requires the due assignment and performance of certain functions, by which "each person, minister or layman, should carry out all and only those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy." [5] This also demands that the meaning and proper nature of each part and of each song be carefully observed. To attain this, those parts especially should be sung which by their very nature require to be sung, using the kind and form of music which is proper to their character.

7. Between the solemn, fuller form of liturgical celebration, in which everything that demands singing is in fact sung, and the simplest form, in which singing is not used, there can be various degrees according to the greater or lesser place allotted to singing. However, in selecting the parts which are to be sung, one should start with those that are by their nature of greater importance, and especially those which are to be sung by the priest or by the ministers, with the people replying, or those which are to be sung by the priest and people together. The other parts may be gradually added according as they are proper to the people alone or to the choir alone.

8. Whenever, for a liturgical service which is to be celebrated in sung form, one can make a choice between various people, it is desirable that those who are known to be more proficient in singing be given preference; this is especially the case in more solemn liturgical celebrations and in those which either require more difficult singing, or are transmitted by radio or television.[6]

If, however, a choice of this kind cannot be made, and the priest or minister does not possess a voice suitable for the proper execution of the singing, he can render without singing one or more of the more difficult parts which concern him, reciting them in a loud and distinct voice. However, this must not be done merely for the convenience of the priest or minister.

9. In selecting the kind of sacred music to be used, whether it be for the choir or for the people, the capacities of those who are to sing the music must be taken into account. No kind of sacred music is prohibited from liturgical actions by the Church as long as it corresponds to the spirit of the liturgical celebration itself and the nature of its individual parts,[7] and does not hinder the active participation of the people.[8]

10. In order that the faithful may actively participate more willingly and with greater benefit, it is fitting that the format of the celebration and the degree of participation in it should be varied as much as possible, according to the solemnity of the day and the nature of the congregation present.

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

12. It is for the Holy See alone to determine the more important general principles which are, as it were, the basis of sacred music, according to the norms handed down, but especially according to the Constitution on the Liturgy. Direction in this matter, within the limits laid down, also belongs to the competent territorial Episcopal Conferences of various kinds, which have been legitimately constituted, and to the individual bishop.[9]

13. Liturgical services are celebrations of the Church, that is, of the holy people, united under and directed by the bishop or priest.[10] The priest and his ministers, because of the sacred order they have received, hold a special place in these celebrations, as do also—by reason of the ministry they perform—the servers, readers, commentators and those in the choir.[11]

14. The priest, acting in the person of Christ, presides over the gathered assembly. Since the prayers which are said or sung by him aloud are proclaimed in the name of the entire holy people and of all present,[12] they should be devoutly listened to by all.

15. The faithful fulfil their liturgical role by making that full, conscious and active participation which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy itself and which is, by reason of baptism, the right and duty of the Christian people.[13] This participation

(a) Should be above all internal, in the sense that by it the faithful join their mind to what they pronounce or hear, and cooperate with heavenly grace,[14]

(b) Must be, on the other hand, external also, that is, such as to show the internal participation by gestures and bodily attitudes, by the acclamations, responses and singing.[15]

The faithful should also be taught to unite themselves interiorly to what the ministers or choir sing, so that by listening to them they may raise their minds to God.

16. One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song. Therefore the active participation of the whole people, which is shown in singing, is to be carefully promoted as follows:

(a) It should first of all include acclamations, responses to the greetings of the priest and ministers and to the prayers of litany form, and also antiphons and psalms, refrains or repeated responses, hymns and canticles.[16]

(b) Through suitable instruction and practices, the people should be gradually led to a fuller—indeed, to a complete—participation in those parts of the singing which pertain to them.

(c) Some of the people's song, however, especially if the faithful have not yet been sufficiently instructed, or if musical settings for several voices are used, can be handed over to the choir alone, provided that the people are not excluded from those parts that concern them. But the usage of entrusting to the choir alone the entire singing of the whole Proper and of the whole Ordinary, to the complete exclusion of the people's participation in the singing, is to be deprecated.

17. At the proper times, all should observe a reverent silence.[17] Through it the faithful are not only not considered as extraneous or dumb spectators at the liturgical service, but are associated more intimately in the mystery that is being celebrated, thanks to that interior disposition which derives from the word of God that they have heard, from the songs and prayers that have been uttered, and from spiritual union with the priest in the parts that he says or sings himself.

18. Among the faithful, special attention must be given to the instruction in sacred singing of members of lay religious societies, so that they may support and promote the participation of the people more effectively.[18] The formation of the whole people in singing, should be seriously and patiently undertaken together with liturgical instruction, according to the age, status and way of life of the faithful and the degree of their religious culture; this should be done even from the first years of education in elementary schools.[19]

19. Because of the liturgical ministry it performs, the choir—or the Capella musica, or schola cantorum—deserves particular mention. Its role has become something of yet greater importance and weight by reason of the norms of the Council concerning the liturgical renewal. Its duty is, in effect, to ensure the proper performance of the parts which belong to it, according to the different kinds of music sung, and to encourage the active participation of the faithful in the singing. Therefore:

(a) There should be choirs, or Capellae, or scholae cantorum, especially in cathedrals and other major churches, in seminaries and religious houses of studies, and they should be carefully encouraged.

(b) It would also be desirable for similar choirs to be set up in smaller churches.

20. Large choirs (Capellae musicae) existing in basilicas, cathedrals, monasteries and other major churches, which have in the course of centuries earned for themselves high renown by preserving and developing a musical heritage of inestimable value, should be retained for sacred celebrations of a more elaborate kind, according to their own traditional norms, recognized and approved by the Ordinary.

However, the directors of these choirs and the rectors of the churches should take care that the people always associate themselves with the singing by performing at least the easier sections of those parts which belong to them.

21. Provision should be made for at least one or two properly trained singers, especially where there is no possibility of setting up even a small choir. The singer will present some simpler musical settings, with the people taking part, and can lead and support the faithful as far as is needed. The presence of

such a singer is desirable even in churches which have a choir, for those celebrations in which the choir cannot take part but which may fittingly be performed with some solemnity and therefore with singing.

22. The choir can consist, according to the customs of each country and other circumstances, of either men and boys, or men and boys only, or men and women, or even, where there is a genuine case for it, of women only.

23. Taking into account the layout of each church, the choir should be placed in such a way:

- (a) That its nature should be clearly apparent—namely, that it is a part of the whole congregation, and that it fulfills a special role;
- (b) That it is easier for it to fulfil its liturgical function;[20]
- (c) That each of its members may be able to participate easily in the Mass, that is to say by sacramental participation.

Whenever the choir also includes women, it should be placed outside the sanctuary (presbyterium).

24. Besides musical formation, suitable liturgical and spiritual formation must also be given to the members of the choir, in such a way that the proper performance of their liturgical role will not only enhance the beauty of the celebration and be an excellent example for the faithful, but will bring spiritual benefit to the choir-members themselves.

25. In order that this technical and spiritual formation may more easily be obtained, the diocesan, national and international associations of sacred music should offer their services, especially those that have been approved and several times commended by the Holy See.

26. The priest, the sacred ministers and the servers, the reader and those in the choir, and also the commentator, should perform the parts assigned to them in a way which is comprehensible to the people, in order that the responses of the people, when the rite requires it, may be made easy and spontaneous. It is desirable that the priest, and the ministers of every degree, should join their voices to the voice of the whole faithful in those parts which concern the people.[21]

27. For the celebration of the Eucharist with the people, especially on Sundays and feast days, a form of sung Mass (Missa in cantu) is to be preferred as much as possible, even several times on the same day.

28. The distinction between solemn, sung and read Mass, sanctioned by the Instruction of 1958 (n. 3), is retained, according to the traditional liturgical laws at present in force. However, for the sung Mass (Missa cantata), different degrees of participation are put forward here for reasons of pastoral usefulness, so that it may become easier to make the celebration of Mass more beautiful by singing, according to the capabilities of each congregation.

These degrees are so arranged that the first may be used even by itself, but the second and third, wholly or partially, may never be used without the first. In this way the faithful will be continually led towards an ever greater participation in the singing.

29. The following belong to the first degree:

- (a) In the entrance rites: the greeting of the priest together with the reply of the people; the prayer.

(b) In the Liturgy of the Word: the acclamations at the Gospel.

(c) In the Eucharistic Liturgy: the prayer over the offerings; the preface with its dialogue and the Sanctus; the final doxology of the Canon, the Lord's prayer with its introduction and embolism; the Pax Domini; the prayer after the Communion; the formulas of dismissal.

30. The following belong to the second degree:

(a) the Kyrie, Gloria and Agnus Dei;

(b) the Creed;

(c) the prayer of the faithful.

31. The following belong to the third degree:

(a) the songs at the Entrance and Communion processions;

(b) the songs after the Lesson or Epistle;

(c) the Alleluia before the Gospel;

(d) the song at the Offertory;

(e) the readings of Sacred Scripture, unless it seems more suitable to proclaim them without singing.

32. The custom legitimately in use in certain places and widely confirmed by indults, of substituting other songs for the songs given in the Graduale for the Entrance, Offertory and Communion, can be retained according to the judgment of the competent territorial authority, as long as songs of this sort are in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast or with the liturgical season. It is for the same territorial authority to approve the texts of these songs.

33. It is desirable that the assembly of the faithful should participate in the songs of the Proper as much as possible, especially through simple responses and other suitable settings.

The song after the lessons, be it in the form of gradual or responsorial psalm, has a special importance among the songs of the Proper. By its very nature, it forms part of the Liturgy, of the Word. It should be performed with all seated and listening to it—and, what is more, participating in it as far as possible.

34. The songs which are called the "Ordinary of the Mass," if they are sung by musical settings written for several voices may be performed by the choir according to the customary norms, either a capella, or with instrumental accompaniment, as long as the people are not completely excluded from taking part in the singing.

In other cases, the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass can be divided between the choir and the people or even between two sections of the people themselves: one can alternate by verses, or one can follow other suitable divisions which divide the text into larger sections. In these cases, the following points are to be noted: it is preferable that the Creed, since it is a formula of profession of faith, should be sung by all, or in such a way as to permit a fitting participation by the faithful; it is preferable that the Sanctus, as the concluding acclamation of the Preface, should normally be sung by the whole congregation together with the priest; the Agnus Dei may be repeated as often as necessary, especially in concelebrations,

where it accompanies the Fraction; it is desirable that the people should participate in this song, as least by the final invocation.

35. The Lord's Prayer is best performed by the people together with the priest.[22]

If it is sung in Latin, the melodies already legitimately existing should be used; if, however, it is sung in the vernacular, the settings are to be approved by the competent territorial authority.

36. There is no reason why some of the Proper or Ordinary should not be sung in said Masses. Moreover, some other song can also, on occasions, be sung at the beginning, at the Offertory, at the Communion and at the end of Mass. It is not sufficient, however, that these songs be merely "Eucharistic"—they must be in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast, or with the liturgical season.

#### IV. The Language To Be Used In Sung Liturgical Celebrations, And On Preserving The Heritage Of Sacred Music

47. According to the Constitution on the Liturgy, "the use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites."[30]

However, since "the use of the vernacular may frequently be of great advantage to the people"[31] "it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used. Its decrees have to be approved, that is, confirmed by the Apostolic See."[32]

In observing these norms exactly, one will therefore employ that form of participation which best matches the capabilities of each congregation.

Pastors of souls should take care that besides the vernacular "the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them."[33]

48. Where the vernacular has been introduced into the celebration of Mass, the local Ordinaries will judge whether it may be opportune to preserve one or more Masses celebrated in Latin—especially sung Masses (Missae in cantu)—in certain churches, above all in large cities, where many come together with faithful of different languages.

49. As regards the use of Latin or the mother tongue in the sacred celebrations carried out in seminaries, the norms of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities concerning the liturgical formation of the students should be observed.

The members of Institutes professing the evangelical virtues should observe, in this matter, the norms contained in the Apostolic Letter *Sacrificium Laudis* of 15 August 1966 besides the Instruction on the language to be used by religious in celebrating the Divine Office and conventual or community Mass, given by this Sacred Congregation of Rites on 23 November 1965.

50. In sung liturgical services celebrated in Latin:

(a) Gregorian chant, as proper to the Roman liturgy, should be given pride of place, other things being equal.[34] Its melodies, contained in the "typical" editions, should be used, to the extent that this is possible.

(b) "It is also desirable that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies, for use in smaller churches."[36]

(c) Other musical settings, written for one or more voices, be they taken from the traditional heritage or from new works, should be held in honor, encouraged and used as the occasion demands.[36]

51. Pastors of souls, having taken into consideration pastoral usefulness and the character of their own language, should see whether parts of the heritage of sacred music, written in previous centuries for Latin texts, could also be conveniently used, not only in liturgical celebrations in Latin but also in those performed in the vernacular. There is nothing to prevent different parts in one and the same celebration being sung in different languages.

52. In order to preserve the heritage of sacred music and genuinely promote the new forms of sacred singing, "great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutes and schools," especially in those higher institutes intended specially for this.[37] Above all, the study and practice of Gregorian chant is to be promoted, because, with its special characteristics, it is a basis of great importance for the development of sacred music.

53. New works of sacred music should conform faithfully to the principles and norms set out above. In this way they will have "the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, being within the capacities not merely of large choirs but of smaller choirs, facilitating the participation of all the faithful."[38]

As regards the heritage that has been handed down those parts which correspond to the needs of the renewed liturgy should first be brought to light. Competent experts in this field must then carefully consider whether other parts can be adapted to the same needs. As for those pieces which do not correspond to the nature of the liturgy or cannot be harmonized with the pastoral celebration of the liturgy—they may be profitably transferred to popular devotions, especially to celebrations of the word of God.[39]

## V. Preparing Melodies For Vernacular Texts

54. In preparing popular versions of those parts which will be set to melodies, and especially of the Psalter, experts should take care that fidelity to the Latin text is suitably harmonized with applicability of the vernacular text to musical settings. The nature and laws of each language must be respected, and the features and special characteristics of each people must be taken into consideration: all this, together with the laws of sacred music, should be carefully considered by musicians in the preparation of the new melodies.

The competent territorial authority will therefore ensure that in the commission entrusted with the composition of versions for the people, there are experts in the subjects already mentioned as well as in Latin and the vernacular; from the outset of the work, they must combine their efforts.

55. It will be for the competent territorial authority to decide whether certain vernacular texts set to music which have been handed down from former times, can in fact be used, even though they may not conform in all details with the legitimately approved versions of the liturgical texts.

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

57. New melodies to be used by the priests and ministers must be approved by the competent territorial authority.[40]

58. Those Episcopal Conferences whom it may concern will ensure that for one and the same language, used in different regions, there will be a single translation. It is also desirable that as far as possible, there should be one or more common melodies for the parts which concern the priest and ministers, and for the responses and acclamations of the people, so that the common participation of those who use the same language may be encouraged.

59. Musicians will enter on this new work with the desire to continue that tradition which has furnished the Church, in her divine worship, with a truly abundant heritage. Let them examine the works of the past, their types and characteristics, but let them also pay careful attention to the new laws and requirements of the liturgy, so that "new forms may in some way grow organically from forms that already exist,"[41] and the new work will form a new part in the musical heritage of the Church, not unworthy of its past.

60. The new melodies for the vernacular texts certainly need to undergo a period of experimentation in order that they may attain a sufficient maturity and perfection. However, anything done in churches, even if only for experimental purposes, which is unbecoming to the holiness of the place, the dignity of the liturgy and the devotion of the faithful, must be avoided.

61. Adapting sacred music for those regions which possess a musical tradition of their own, especially mission areas,[42] will require a very specialized preparation by the experts. It will be a question in fact of how to harmonize the sense of the sacred with the spirit, traditions and characteristic expressions proper to each of these peoples. Those who work in this field should have a sufficient knowledge both of the liturgy and musical tradition of the Church, and of the language, popular songs and other characteristic expressions of the people for whose benefit they are working.

## VI. Sacred Instrumental Music

62. Musical instruments can be very useful in sacred celebrations, whether they accompany the singing or whether they are played as solo instruments.

"The pipe organ is to be held in high esteem in the Latin Church, since it is its traditional instrument, the sound of which can add a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lift up men's minds to God and higher things.

"The use of other instruments may also be admitted in divine worship, given the decision and consent of the competent territorial authority, provided that the instruments are suitable for sacred use, or can be adapted to it, that they are in keeping with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful."<sup>[43]</sup>

63. In permitting and using musical instruments, the culture and traditions of individual peoples must be taken into account. However, those instruments which are, by common opinion and use, suitable for secular music only, are to be altogether prohibited from every liturgical celebration and from popular devotions.<sup>[44]</sup>

Any musical instrument permitted in divine worship should be used in such a way that it meets the needs of the liturgical celebration, and is in the interests both of the beauty of worship and the edification of the faithful.

64. The use of musical instruments to accompany the singing can act as a support to the voices, render participation easier, and achieve a deeper union in the assembly. However, their sound should not so overwhelm the voices that it is difficult to make out the text; and when some part is proclaimed aloud by the priest or a minister by virtue of his role, they should be silent.

65. In sung or said Masses, the organ, or other instrument legitimately admitted, can be used to accompany the singing of the choir and the people; it can also be played solo at the beginning before the priest reaches the altar, at the Offertory, at the Communion, and at the end of Mass.

The same rule, with the necessary adaptations, can be applied to other sacred celebrations.

66. The playing of these same instruments as solos is not permitted in Advent, Lent, during the Sacred Triduum and in the Offices and Masses of the Dead.

67. It is highly desirable that organists and other musicians should not only possess the skill to play properly the instrument entrusted to them: they should also enter into and be thoroughly aware of the spirit of the liturgy, so that even when playing ex tempore, they will enrich the sacred celebration according to the true nature of each of its parts, and encourage the participation of the faithful.<sup>[46]</sup>

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#### Notes:

1. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 112.
2. Cf. St. Pius X, Motu Proprio 'Tra le sollecitudini,' n. 2.
3. Cf. Instruction of the S.C.R., 3 September 1958, n. 4.
4. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 113.
5. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 28.
6. Instruction of the S.C.R., 3 September 1958, n. 95.
7. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy Art. 116.
8. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy Art. 28.
9. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 22.
10. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 26 and 41-32; Constitution on the Church, Art. 28.
11. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 29.
12. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 33.

13. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 14.
- 14 Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy Art. 11.
- 15 Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy Art. 30.
16. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 30.
17. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 30.
18. Cf. Instruction of the S.C.R., 26 September 1964, (D.3), nn. 19 and 59.
19. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 19; Instruction of the S.C.R., 3 September 1958, nn. 106-8.
20. Cf. *Inter Oecumenici*, (D.3).
21. Cf. *Inter Oecumenici*.
22. Cf. *Inter Oecumenici*, n. 48.
30. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 36-1.
31. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 36:2.
32. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 36:3.
33. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 54; *Inter Oecumenici*, 59.
34. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 116.
35. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art 117.
36. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 116.
37. Constitution on the Liturgy Art. 115
38. Constitution on the Liturgy Art. 121
39. Cf. above, n. 46.
40. Cf. *Inter Oecumenici*, n. 42.
41. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art 23
42. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art 119.
43. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 120.
44. a. Instruction of the S.C.R., 3 September 1958, n. 70.
45. Cf. above, n. 24.
46. Cf. Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 44.

# General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2011)

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*The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) provides the normative instructions for the celebration of the Mass. This GIRM was published in Latin in 2002 and was republished in English with adaptations proper to the United States in 2011. Not every instruction that mentions singing is reproduced below, as nearly every portion of the Mass can be sung in some form. Instead, the major instructions are reproduced.*

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## Chapter II: The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements, and Its Parts

### II. The Different Elements of the Mass

#### *The Manner of Pronouncing the Different Texts*

38. In texts that are to be pronounced in a loud and clear voice, whether by the Priest or the Deacon, or by a reader, or by everyone, the voice should correspond to the genre of the text itself, that is, depending upon whether it is a reading, a prayer, an explanatory comment, an acclamation, or a sung text; it should also be suited to the form of celebration and to the solemnity of the gathering. Consideration should also be given to the characteristics of different languages and of the culture of different peoples.

Therefore, in the rubrics and in the norms that follow, words such as “say” and “proclaim” are to be understood either of singing or of reciting, with due regard for the principles stated here above.

#### *The Importance of Singing*

39. The Christian faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together Psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles (cf. Col 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart’s joy (cf. Acts 2:46). Thus St. Augustine says rightly, “Singing is for one who loves,”[48] and there is also an ancient proverb: “Whoever sings well prays twice over.”

40. Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of peoples and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g., in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are in principle meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people not be absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on Holydays of Obligation.

However, in the choosing of the parts actually to be sung, preference is to be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those which are to be sung by the Priest or the Deacon or a reader, with the people replying, or by the Priest and people together.[49]

41. The main place should be given, all things being equal, to Gregorian chant, as being proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other kinds of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.[50]

Since the faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is desirable that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Profession of Faith and the Lord's Prayer, according to the simpler settings.[51]

### **III. The Individual Parts of the Mass**

#### *The Entrance*

47. When the people are gathered, and as the Priest enters with the Deacon and ministers, the Entrance Chant begins. Its purpose is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical time or festivity, and accompany the procession of the Priest and ministers.

48. This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, there are four options for the Entrance Chant: (1) the antiphon from the Missal or the antiphon with its Psalm from the Graduale Romanum, as set to music there or in another setting; (2) the antiphon and Psalm of the Graduale Simplex for the liturgical time; (3) a chant from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) another liturgical chant that is suited to the sacred action, the day, or the time of year, similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.

If there is no singing at the Entrance, the antiphon given in the Missal is recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a reader; otherwise, it is recited by the Priest himself, who may even adapt it as an introductory explanation (cf. no. 31).

#### *The Gloria in Excelsis*

53. The Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) is a most ancient and venerable hymn by which the Church, gathered in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be replaced by any other. It is intoned by the Priest or, if appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir; but it is sung either by everyone together, or by the people alternately with the choir, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is to be recited either by everybody together or by two choirs responding one to the other.

It is sung or said on Sundays outside Advent and Lent, and also on Solemnities and Feasts, and at particular celebrations of a more solemn character.

#### *The Responsorial Psalm*

61. After the First Reading follows the Responsorial Psalm, which is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word and which has great liturgical and pastoral importance, since it fosters meditation on the Word of God.

The Responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should usually be taken from the Lectionary.

It is preferable for the Responsorial Psalm to be sung, at least as far as the people's response is concerned. Hence the psalmist, or cantor of the Psalm, sings the Psalm verses at the ambo or another suitable place, while the whole congregation sits and listens, normally taking part by means of the response, except when the Psalm is sung straight through, that is, without a response. However, in order that the people may be able to sing the Psalm response more easily, texts of some responses and Psalms have been chosen for the different times of the year or for the different categories of Saints. These may be used instead of the text corresponding to the reading whenever the Psalm is sung. If the Psalm cannot be sung, then it should be recited in a way that is particularly suited to fostering meditation on the Word of God.

In the Dioceses of the United States of America, instead of the Psalm assigned in the Lectionary, there may be sung either the Responsorial Gradual from the Graduale Romanum, or the Responsorial Psalm or the Alleluia Psalm from the Graduale Simplex, as described in these books, or an antiphon and Psalm from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, including Psalms arranged in metrical form, providing that they have been approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop. Songs or hymns may not be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.

### *The Acclamation before the Gospel*

62. After the reading that immediately precedes the Gospel, the Alleluia or another chant laid down by the rubrics is sung, as the liturgical time requires. An acclamation of this kind constitutes a rite or act in itself, by which the gathering of the faithful welcomes and greets the Lord who is about to speak to them in the Gospel and profess their faith by means of the chant. It is sung by everybody, standing, and is led by the choir or a cantor, being repeated as the case requires. The verse, on the other hand, is sung either by the choir or by a cantor.

- a) The Alleluia is sung in every time of year other than Lent. The verses are taken from the Lectionary or the Graduale.
- b) During Lent, instead of the Alleluia, the Verse before the Gospel as given in the Lectionary is sung. It is also possible to sing another Psalm or Tract, as found in the Graduale.

63. When there is only one reading before the Gospel:

- a) during a time of year when the Alleluia is prescribed, either an Alleluia Psalm or the Responsorial Psalm followed by the Alleluia with its verse may be used;
- b) during a time of year when the Alleluia is not foreseen, either the Psalm and the Verse before the Gospel or the Psalm alone may be used;
- c) the Alleluia or the Verse before the Gospel, if not sung, may be omitted.

64. The Sequence which, except on Easter Sunday and on Pentecost Day, is optional, is sung before the Alleluia.

### *The Preparation of the Gifts*

74. The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the Offertory Chant (cf. no. 37 b), which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. The norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance Chant (cf. no. 48). Singing may always accompany the rite at the Offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.

### *Communion*

86. While the Priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion Chant is begun, its purpose being to express the spiritual union of the communicants by means of the unity of their voices, to show gladness of heart, and to bring out more clearly the “communitarian” character of the procession to receive the Eucharist. The singing is prolonged for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful.[73] However, if there is to be a hymn after Communion, the Communion Chant should be ended in a timely manner.

Care should be taken that singers, too, can receive Communion with ease.

87. In the Dioceses of the United States of America, there are four options for singing at Communion: (1) the antiphon from the Missal or the antiphon with its Psalm from the Graduale Romanum, as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the antiphon with Psalm from the Graduale Simplex of the liturgical time; (3) a chant from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) some other suitable liturgical chant (cf. no. 86) approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop. This is sung either by the choir alone or by the choir or a cantor with the people.

However, if there is no singing, the antiphon given in the Missal may be recited either by the faithful, or by some of them, or by a reader; otherwise, it is recited by the Priest himself after he has received Communion and before he distributes Communion to the faithful.

88. When the distribution of Communion is over, if appropriate, the Priest and faithful pray quietly for some time. If desired, a Psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the whole congregation.

## Chapter III: Duties and Ministries in the Mass

### III. Particular Ministries

#### *Other Functions*

102. It is the psalmist's place to sing the Psalm or other biblical canticle to be found between the readings. To carry out this function correctly, it is necessary for the psalmist to be accomplished in the art of singing Psalms and have a facility in public speaking and elocution.

103. Among the faithful, the schola cantorum or choir exercises its own liturgical function, its place being to take care that the parts proper to it, in keeping with the different genres of chant, are properly carried out and to foster the active participation of the faithful by means of the singing.[86] What is said

about the schola cantorum also applies, with due regard for the relevant norms, to other musicians, and especially the organist.

104. It is fitting that there be a cantor or a choir director to direct and support the people's singing. Indeed, when there is no choir, it is up to the cantor to direct the different chants, with the people taking the part proper to them.[87]

## Chapter V: The Arrangement and Ornamentation of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist

### III. The Arrangement of the Church

#### *The Place for the Schola Cantorum and the Musical Instruments*

312. The schola cantorum (choir) should be so positioned with respect to the arrangement of each church that its nature may be clearly evident, namely as part of the assembled community of the faithful undertaking a specific function. The positioning should also help the choir to exercise this function more easily and allow each choir member full sacramental participation in the Mass in a convenient manner.[122]

313. The organ and other lawfully approved musical instruments should be placed in a suitable place so that they can sustain the singing of both the choir and the people and be heard with ease by everybody if they are played alone. It is appropriate that before being put into liturgical use, the organ be blessed according to the rite described in the Roman Ritual.[123]

In Advent the use of the organ and other musical instruments should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this time of year, without expressing in anticipation the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord.

In Lent the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only in order to support the singing. Exceptions, however, are Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts.

## Chapter VII: The Choice of the Mass and Its Parts

### II. The Choice of Texts for the Mass

#### *The Chants*

366. It is not permitted to substitute other chants for those found in the Order of Mass, for example, at the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God).

367. In choosing the chants between the readings, as well as the chants at the Entrance, at the Offertory, and at Communion, the norms laid down in their proper places are to be observed (cf. nos. 40-41, 47-48, 61-64, 74, 86-88).

## Chapter IX: Adaptations within the Competence of Bishops and Bishops' Conferences

393. Bearing in mind the important place that singing has in a celebration as a necessary or integral part of the Liturgy,[151] all musical settings for the texts of the Ordinary of Mass, for the people's responses and acclamations, and for the special rites that occur in the course of the liturgical year must be submitted to the Secretariat of Divine Worship of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for review and approval prior to publication.

While the organ is to be accorded pride of place, other wind, stringed, or percussion instruments may be admitted into divine worship in the Dioceses of the United States of America, according to longstanding local usage, in so far as these are truly suitable for sacred use, or can be made suitable.

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[48] St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo 336, 1: PL 38: 1472.*

[49] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction, Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967, nos. 7, 16: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 302, 305.

[50] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 116; cf. also no. 30.

[51] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 54; Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction, Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964, no. 59: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 891; *Instruction, Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967, no. 47: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 314.

[73] Cf. Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, *Instruction, Inestimabile donum*, April 3, 1980, no. 17: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 72 (1980), p. 338.

[86] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction, Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967, no. 19: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 306.

[87] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction, Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967, no. 21: pp. 306-307.

[122] Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction, Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967, no. 23: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 307.

[123] Cf. *Rituale Romanum, De Benedictionibus, editio typica*, 1984, *Ordo benedictionis organi*, nos. 1052-1067.

[151] Cf. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 112.

# Clarifying Documents

# Jubilate Deo and Accompanying Letters (1974)

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*In 1974, Pope Paul VI published a small book of Gregorian Chants (Jubilate Deo) that he wished every Catholic to know. The commentaries accompanying this book are helpful in understanding how this pope, who was charged with implementing the Second Vatican Council, thought about Gregorian chant.*

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## *Letter Voluntati obsequens* to bishops, accompanying the booklet *Jubilate Deo*, 14 April 1974

Pope Paul VI has expressed often, and even recently, the wish that the faithful of all countries be able to sing at least a few Gregorian chants in Latin (for example, the *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*)<sup>1</sup>. In compliance, this Congregation has prepared the enclosed booklet *Jubilate Deo*, which provides a short collection of such Gregorian chants.

I have the honour and office of sending you a copy of this booklet as a gift from the Pope himself. I also take this occasion to commend to your own pastoral concerns this new measure intended to ensure the carrying out of the prescription of Vatican Council II: 'Steps should be taken enabling the faithful to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass belonging to them.'<sup>2</sup>

Whenever the faithful pray together as a community, they show at once the complex diversity of a people gathered 'from every tribe, language, and nation' and their unity in faith and charity. The diversity stands out in the many languages lawfully used in the liturgy and in the song settings suited to those languages. The languages and songs convey the religious spirit of each particular people, along with the identical teachings of faith; the different types of music correspond to the culture and traditions of each people. The unity of faith, on the other hand, stands out in a marked manner through the use of Latin and Gregorian chant. This, as we all well know, has through the ages been the accompaniment for the liturgy of the Roman Rite; it has nurtured faith and devotion; it has achieved such perfection that the Church rightly regards it as a special heritage of incomparable excellence; finally, it has been acknowledged by Vatican Council II as 'the chant distinctive of the Roman liturgy.'<sup>3</sup>

Undoubtedly one of the principal aims of the reform of the liturgy is the promotion of congregational singing, in order to give fuller expression to the festive, communal, and familial character of the liturgy. 'A liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the ministers of each rank take their parts in them, and the congregation actively participates.'<sup>4</sup> The issue is a major concern for those agencies charged with the reform of the liturgy and one that faces its own problems and obstacles. Thus, as it has often done before, the Congregation for Divine Worship appeals for the furtherance and growth of congregational singing.

As to singing in the vernacular: the reform of the liturgy also 'offers to composers an opportunity to test their own abilities, their inventiveness, their pastoral zeal.'<sup>5</sup> Thus composers of both the music and the

words must be inspired and encouraged to put all their energies and abilities at the service of this noble cause. This is the means toward the creation of songs for the people that are truly worthy to become part of the praise of God, the liturgical rites, or popular devotions, because the songs are expressions of faith and of genuine art. The Council's inauguration of the reform of the liturgy set a new ideal and a new goal for the Church's musical practice and for sacred song: 'A new flowering is today awaited in the art of religious music because in every country the vernacular has been brought into liturgical worship. The vernacular must not be allowed to lack the beauty and expressiveness that lie within the power of genuinely religious music and singing suited to the texts.'<sup>6</sup>

In its successful progress the reform of the liturgy does not reject nor can it spurn the entire past, but 'is to preserve its heritage with great care.'<sup>7</sup> The liturgical renewal holds in high esteem whatever good the past contains and whatever advantage it brings to the spheres of religion, culture, and art; at the same time it safe guards all those elements that can be of service in strengthening and making clearer to all the bond between believers. Thus the enclosed short collection of Gregorian chants should meet this need and cause the faithful to draw closer together and to unite themselves in unanimity with all their brothers and sisters in the faith as well as with the living tradition of ages past. Thus the intent to increase singing in large gatherings of the faithful must include concern for Latin Gregorian chants.

That need is all the more pressing in view of the proximity of the Holy Year 1975, a time when the faithful of different languages, nations, and races will gather in large numbers to worship the Lord together.

Lastly, there must be particular attention to keeping a sound balance between vernacular singing and Gregorian chant, especially on the part of those who, because of their office, are more involved in the Church's life and therefore more keenly aware of that life. Accordingly the Pope urges 'that Gregorian chant be preserved and performed in monasteries, religious houses, and seminaries as a privileged form of sung prayer and as an element of the highest cultural and instructional value.'<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the study and use of Gregorian chant 'because of its distinctive qualities are an important foundation for a mastery of sacred music.'<sup>9</sup>

In sending you this gift of Pope Paul, I have thought it opportune to restate his frequently expressed mind and intention that the conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy be fully and exactly put into practice. After you have consulted the established diocesan and national agencies responsible for the liturgy, music, pastoral work, and catechetics, you will decide on the most practical method for the faithful to learn and to sing the Latin chants in the booklet *Jubilate Deo*. You will also establish the means for the agencies mentioned to promote the preservation and use of the Gregorian chant. These steps will provide the liturgical reform with new possibilities for contributing to the building up of the whole Church.

The present volume may be published and a vernacular translation added for a better understanding of the Latin text.

### Notes:

1. See Paul VI, Address to a general audience, 22 Aug. 1973: Address to the CIMS, 12 Oct. 1973.

Secretariat of State, letter to the Aasociazione Italiana di Santa Cecilia, 30 Sept. 1973.

2. SC art. 54

3. SC art. 126

4. Instr. MusSacr, 5 March 1967, no, 5
5. See Instr MusSacr no. 54, Paul VI, Addr. to the Associazione Italians di Santa Cecilia, 24 Sept. 1972
6. Paul VI, Address to the CIMS, 12 Oct. 1973
7. SC art. 114
8. Secretariat of State, Letter of Card. I. Villot to the Aesociazione Italiana di Santa Cecilia, 30 Sept.
9. Instr. MusSacr no.52

## Booklet *Jubilate Deo*, Preface, 11 April 1974

### *The bond of unity...*

In the Constitution on the Liturgy, after urging that the vernacular take a proper place in liturgical celebration, Vatican Council II adds this directive: 'Nevertheless steps should be taken enabling the faithful to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass belonging to them.'<sup>1</sup>

With this intention, Pope Paul VI on several recent occasions has expressed the desire that Gregorian chant accompany the eucharistic celebrations of the people of God and lend its strong support to these celebrations with its pleasing music and also that the voice of the faithful be heard in both Gregorian and vernacular singing.<sup>2</sup>

The present short volume is a response to the Pope's wishes. It is a collection of the simpler melodies for the faithful to sing together — particularly on the occasion of the Holy Year.

In this way Gregorian chant will continue to be a bond that forms the members of many nations into a single people, gathered together in Christ's name with one heart, one mind, and one voice. This living unity, symbolized by the union of voices that speak in different languages, accents, and inflections is a striking manifestation of the diversified harmony of the one Church. As St. Am- brose exclaims: 'How close the bond of unity is when so many people join together in the one chorus. They are like the different strings of the harp that yet produces one melody. The harpist may often make mistakes while playing on just a few strings, but the artist who is the Holy Spirit never makes a mistake while playing on the hearts of a whole people.'<sup>3</sup>

May God grant that the desire shared by all will be successfully realized, namely, that the heart of the Church at prayer will have a joyful, resounding voice throughout the world in these pleasing and reverent melodies.

### Notes:

1. SC art. 54
2. See Paul VI, Address to a general audience of the CMS, 12 Oct. 1973. See also Secretariat of State, Letter of Card, J. Villot to the meeting of the Associazione Italiana di Santa Cecilia, Genoa, 26-30 Sept. 1963
3. Ambrose, *Explanationes Psalmorum* in Ps. 1:9: PL 14, 925.

## Commentary in *Notitiae* 10 (1974) 122:

The Congregation for Divine Worship has seen to the publication of the small, but beautifully made volume, *Jubilate Deo* (Vatican Polyglot Press, 54 pp., 11 x 16 cm., printed in black and red, four illustrations inserted from liturgical codices of the Vatican Library, cover title stamped in gold with the first notes of the melody for *Iubilate*, the offertory antiphon of the Second Sunday after Epiphany and the First Sunday after Easter from the old Roman Gradual; see *Ordo Cantus Missae* nos. 88 and 89). The volume is a collection of the simpler Gregorian chants that the faithful should know, in keeping with the mind of the Constitution on the Liturgy and the desire expressed by Pope Paul VI on numerous occasions. The volume has been sent in the Pope's name to each of the bishops and superiors general of religious, along with a letter of the Congregation for Divine Worship, *Volunta Obsequiens*.

The first section of *Jubilate Deo* bears the title *Cantus Missæ* and supplies all the chants for the Ordinary of the Mass along with the responses incorporated into the new Roman Missal; these are already well known in the vernacular but hardly at all in Latin.

Under the title *Cantus varii*, the second part of the volume contains chants for various celebrations (eucharistic chants, hymns, and canticles, Marian antiphons, the *Te Deum*, etc.).

Although reduced to a minimum, this selection will be extremely useful if the faithful learn the chants contained in the volume, as the Pope and the Congregation for Divine Worship intend.

# Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (2007)

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*Sing to the Lord is not, strictly speaking, a binding document. It was approved for publication by a vote of the USCCB but was not submitted to Rome for ratification, meaning that it was not intended to and does not have the force of law. However, it is a comprehensive document, written by a committee of episcopal leaders of the Church in the United States, which attempts to apply the universal norms on liturgical music to the context of the United States. As such, it is an invaluable reference for application of the Roman documents.*

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## Foreword

Greetings from the bishops of the United States to priests, deacons, liturgists, music directors, composers, cantors, choirs, congregations, and faith communities throughout the United States. “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> It is our duty and our joy as shepherds of the Church to guide and oversee liturgical song in each particular Church. Liturgy is the source of the Church’s prayer and action, and the summit by which our lives and all our ministries ascend to the Father. We pray that this document will draw all who worship the Lord into the fullness of liturgical, musical prayer.

## I. WHY WE SING

1. God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person, in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises.<sup>2</sup>
2. A cry from deep within our being, music is a way for God to lead us to the realm of higher things.<sup>3</sup> As St. Augustine says, “Singing is for the one who loves.”<sup>4</sup> Music is therefore a sign of God’s love for us and of our love for him. In this sense, it is very personal. But unless music sounds, it is not music, and whenever it sounds, it is accessible to others. By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people.

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<sup>1</sup> Eph 1:1.

<sup>2</sup> “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for the temple of God, which you are, is holy” (1 Cor 3:16-17).

<sup>3</sup> See St. Augustine, Epis. 161, *De origine animae hominis*, 1, 2; PL XXXIII, 725, as quoted in Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *On Sacred Music (Musicae Sacrae Disciplina)* (MSD), no. 5, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_25121955\\_musicaesacrae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_25121955_musicaesacrae_en.html).

<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermo* 336, 1 (PL 1844-1855, 38, 1472).

3. Our ancestors reveled in this gift, sometimes with God’s urging. “Write out this song, then, for yourselves,” God said to Moses. “Teach it to the Israelites and have them recite it, so that this song may be a witness for me.”<sup>5</sup> The Chosen People, after they passed through the Red Sea, sang as one to the Lord.<sup>6</sup> Deborah, a judge of Israel, sang to the Lord with Barak after God gave them victory.<sup>7</sup> David and the Israelites “made merry before the Lord with all their strength, with singing and with citharas, harps, tambourines, sistruins and cymbals.”<sup>8</sup>

4. Jesus and his apostles sang a hymn before their journey to the Mount of Olives.<sup>9</sup> St. Paul instructed the Ephesians to “[address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts.”<sup>10</sup> He sang with Silas in captivity.<sup>11</sup> The letter of St. James asks, “Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise.”<sup>12</sup>

5. Obedient to Christ and to the Church, we gather in liturgical assembly, week after week. As our predecessors did, we find ourselves “singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in [our] hearts to God.”<sup>13</sup> This common, sung expression of faith within liturgical celebrations strengthens our faith when it grows weak and draws us into the divinely inspired voice of the Church at prayer. Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it. Good music “make[s] the liturgical prayers of the Christian community more alive and fervent so that everyone can praise and beseech the Triune God more powerfully, more intently and more effectively.”<sup>14</sup>

6. “In human life, signs and symbols occupy an important place. As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. . . . Inasmuch as they are creatures, these perceptible realities can become means of expressing the action of God who sanctifies men, and the action of men who offer worship to God.”<sup>15</sup> This sacramental principle is the consistent belief of the Church throughout history. In Liturgy, we use words, gestures, signs, and symbols to proclaim Christ’s presence and to reply with our worship and praise.

7. The primordial song of the Liturgy is the canticle of victory over sin and death. It is the song of the saints, standing beside “the sea of glass”: “They were holding God’s harps, and they sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.”<sup>16</sup> “Liturgical singing is established in the midst of this great historical tension. For Israel, the event of salvation in the Red Sea will always be the main

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<sup>5</sup> Dt 31:19.

<sup>6</sup> Ex 15:1-18, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Jgs 4:4-5:31.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Sm 6:5

<sup>9</sup> Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26

<sup>10</sup> Eph 5:18-19.

<sup>11</sup> “About midnight . . . Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, as the other prisoners listened” (Acts 16:25)

<sup>12</sup> Jas 5:13.

<sup>13</sup> Col 3:16; see General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), no. 39 (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 2003). See Eph 5:19.

<sup>14</sup> MSD, no. 31; see no. 33.

<sup>15</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), 2nd ed., nos. 1146, 1148 (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana-USCCB, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Rev. 15:13

reason for praising God, the basic theme of the songs it sings before God. For Christians, the Resurrection of Christ is the true Exodus. . . . The definitively new song has been intoned. . . .”<sup>17</sup>

8. The Paschal hymn, of course, does not cease when a liturgical celebration ends. Christ, whose praises we have sung, remains with us and leads us through church doors to the whole world, with its joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties.<sup>18</sup> The words Jesus chose from the book of Isaiah at the beginning of his ministry become the song of the Body of Christ. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”<sup>19</sup>

9. Charity, justice, and evangelization are thus the normal consequences of liturgical celebration. Particularly inspired by sung participation, the body of the Word Incarnate goes forth to spread the Gospel with full force and compassion. In this way, the Church leads men and women “to the faith, freedom and peace of Christ by the example of its life and teaching, by the sacraments and other means of grace. Its aim is to open up for all men a free and sure path to full participation in the mystery of Christ.”<sup>20</sup>

## Participation

10. Holy Mother Church clearly affirms the role within worship of the entire liturgical assembly (bishop, priest, deacon, acolytes, ministers of the Word, music leaders, choir, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and the congregation). Through grace, the liturgical assembly partakes in the life of the Blessed Trinity, which is itself a communion of love. In a perfect way, the Persons of the Trinity remain themselves even as they share all that they are. For our part, “we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”<sup>21</sup> The Church urges all members of the liturgical assembly to receive this divine gift and to participate fully “depending on their orders [and] their role in the liturgical services.”<sup>22</sup>

11. Within the gathered assembly, the role of the congregation is especially important. “The full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.”<sup>23</sup>

12. Participation in the Sacred Liturgy must be “internal, in the sense that by it the faithful join their mind to what they pronounce or hear, and cooperate with heavenly grace.”<sup>24</sup> Even when listening to the various prayers and readings of the Liturgy or to the singing of the choir, the assembly continues to

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<sup>17</sup> Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (Ignatius Press, 2000), 137-138.

<sup>18</sup> See Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)* (GS), no. 1, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, new revised edition, ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996). All subsequent Second Vatican Council passages come from the Flannery edition.

<sup>19</sup> Lk 4:18; see Is 61:1-2, 58:6.

<sup>20</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity) (AG), no. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Rom 12:5-6

<sup>22</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)* (SC), no. 26.

<sup>23</sup> SC, no. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Sacred Congregation for Rites, *Musicam Sacram (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy)* (MS), no. 15, in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*; see SC, no. 11.

participate actively as they “unite themselves interiorly to what the ministers or choir sing, so that by listening to them they may raise their minds to God.”<sup>25</sup> “In a culture which neither favors nor fosters meditative quiet, the art of interior listening is learned only with difficulty. Here we see how the liturgy, though it must always be properly inculcated, must also be counter-cultural.”<sup>26</sup>

13. Participation must also be external, so that internal participation can be expressed and reinforced by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes, and by the acclamations, responses, and singing.<sup>27</sup> The quality of our participation in such sung praise comes less from our vocal ability than from the desire of our hearts to sing together of our love for God. Participation in the Sacred Liturgy both expresses and strengthens the faith that is in us.

14. Our participation in the Liturgy is challenging. Sometimes, our voices do not correspond to the convictions of our hearts. At other times, we are distracted or preoccupied by the cares of the world. But Christ always invites us to enter into song, to rise above our own preoccupations, and to give our entire selves to the hymn of his Paschal Sacrifice for the honor and glory of the Most Blessed Trinity.

## II. THE CHURCH AT PRAYER

15. The Church is always at prayer in her ministers and her people, and that prayer takes various forms in her life. Authentic sacred music supports the Church’s prayer by enriching its elements. What follows below are the principal persons and elements that should guide both the development and the use of sacred music in the Liturgy.

### A. The Bishop

16. In his capacity as “the chief steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to his care,”<sup>28</sup> the diocesan bishop is particularly concerned with the promotion of the dignity of liturgical celebrations, “the beauty of the sacred place, of music, and of art.”<sup>29</sup> He carries out this duty through the example of his own celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, encouraging sung participation by his own example; by his attention to the practice of liturgical music in the parishes and communities of his diocese, especially in his own cathedral church; by his promotion of the continuing musical education and formation of clergy and musicians; and by his careful attention to the musical training of future priests and deacons.

17. The bishop is assisted in this role by his staff in the diocesan Office of Worship and/or the diocesan music or liturgical commission, which provides “valuable assistance in promoting sacred music together with pastoral liturgical action in the diocese.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> MS, no. 15.

<sup>26</sup> Pope John Paul II, (Address to Bishops of the Northwest Provinces of the USCCB), in *Ad Limina Addresses: The Addresses of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of the United States, February 1998–October 1998* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998), no. 3.

<sup>27</sup> See SC, no. 30.

<sup>28</sup> GIRM, no. 22.

<sup>29</sup> GIRM, no. 22.

<sup>30</sup> MS, no. 68.

## **B. The Priest**

18. No other single factor affects the Liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the priest celebrant, who “prays in the name of the Church and of the assembled community.”<sup>31</sup> “When he celebrates the Eucharist, . . . [the priest] must serve God and the people with dignity and humility, and by his bearing and by the way he says the divine words he must convey to the faithful the living presence of Christ.”<sup>32</sup>

19. The importance of the priest’s participation in the Liturgy, especially by singing, cannot be overemphasized. The priest sings the presidential prayers and dialogues of the Liturgy according to his capabilities,<sup>33</sup> and he encourages sung participation in the Liturgy by his own example, joining in the congregational song. “If, however. . . the priest or minister does not possess a voice suitable for the proper execution of the singing, he can render without singing one or more of the more difficult parts which concern him, reciting them in a loud and distinct voice. However, this must not be done merely for the convenience of the priest or minister.”<sup>34</sup>

20. Seminaries and other programs of priestly formation should train priests to sing with confidence and to chant those parts of the Mass assigned to them. Those priests who are capable should be trained in the practice of chanting the Gospel on more solemn occasions when a deacon may not be present. At the very least, all priests should be comfortable singing those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer that are assigned to them for which musical notation is provided in the Roman Missal.<sup>35</sup>

21. The priest joins with the congregation in singing the acclamations, chants, hymns, and songs of the Liturgy. However, the priest does not join in the singing of the Memorial Acclamation or the Great Amen. To the greatest extent possible, he should use a congregational worship aid during the processions and other rituals of the Liturgy and should be attentive to the cantor and psalmist as they lead the gathered assembly in song. In order to promote the corporate voice of the assembly when it sings, the priest’s own voice should not be heard above the congregation, nor should he sing the congregational response of the dialogues. While the assembly sings, the priest should step back from a microphone, or, if he is using a wireless microphone, he should turn it off.

## **C. The Deacon**

22. After the priest, the deacon is first among the liturgical ministers, and he should provide an example by actively participating in the song of the gathered assembly.<sup>36</sup>

23. In accord with their abilities, deacons should be prepared to sing those parts of the Liturgy that belong to them. Deacons should receive training in singing the dialogues between deacon and people, such as those at the Gospel and at the dismissal. They should also learn to sing various invitations in the

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<sup>31</sup> GIRM, no. 33.

<sup>32</sup> GIRM, no. 93.

<sup>33</sup> The documents of the post-conciliar liturgical renewal repeatedly commend the ideal of a sung Liturgy with sung dialogues between priest and people, such as *The Lord be with you*, the acclamation at the end of the Gospel, and the introductory dialogue to the Eucharistic Prayer. See MS, nos. 29-31; *Lectionary for Mass (Second Typical Edition): Introduction* (LFM) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998), no. 17; GIRM, no. 40.

<sup>34</sup> MS, no. 8.

<sup>35</sup> See GIRM, no. 147.

<sup>36</sup> See GIRM, no. 94.

rites, the *Exsultet*, the third form of the Act of Penitence, and the Prayer of the Faithful. If they are capable, deacons should be trained in the practice of chanting the Gospel on more solemn occasions. Programs of diaconal preparation should include major and compulsory courses in the chant and song of the Liturgy.

#### D. The Gathered Liturgical Assembly

24. "In the celebration of Mass the faithful form a holy people, a people whom God has made his own, a royal priesthood, so that they may give thanks to God and offer the spotless Victim not only through the hands of the priest but also together with him, and so that they may learn to offer themselves."<sup>37</sup> This is the basis for the "full, conscious and active participation" of the faithful demanded by the very nature of the Liturgy.<sup>38</sup>

25. Because the gathered liturgical assembly forms one body, each of its members must shun "any appearance of individualism or division, keeping before their eyes that they have only one Father in heaven and accordingly are all brothers and sisters to each other."<sup>39</sup>

26. Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly of the faithful participates actively in the Liturgy. The people are encouraged "to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons [and] hymns. . . ."<sup>40</sup> The musical formation of the assembly must be a continuing concern in order to foster full, conscious, and active participation.

27. So that the holy people may sing with one voice, the music must be within its members' capability. Some congregations are able to learn more quickly and will desire more variety. Others will be more comfortable with a stable number of songs so that they can be at ease when they sing. Familiarity with a stable repertoire of liturgical songs rich in theological content can deepen the faith of the community through repetition and memorization. A pastoral judgment must be made in all cases.

#### E. Ministers of Liturgical Music

##### *The Choir*

28. The Second Vatican Council stated emphatically that choirs must be diligently promoted while ensuring that "the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs. . . ."<sup>41</sup> The choir must not minimize the musical participation of the faithful. The congregation commonly sings unison melodies, which are more suitable for generally unrehearsed community singing. This is the primary song of the Liturgy. Choirs and ensembles, on the other hand, comprise persons drawn from the community who possess the requisite musical skills and a commitment to the established schedule of rehearsals and Liturgies. Thus, they are able to enrich the celebration by adding musical elements beyond the capabilities of the congregation alone.

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<sup>37</sup> GIRM, no. 95.

<sup>38</sup> See SC, no. 14.

<sup>39</sup> GIRM, no. 95.

<sup>40</sup> SC, no. 30.

<sup>41</sup> SC, no. 114.

29. Choirs (and ensembles—another form of choir that commonly includes a combination of singers and instrumentalists) exercise their ministry in various ways. An important ministerial role of the choir or ensemble is to sing various parts of the Mass in dialogue or alternation with the congregation. Some parts of the Mass that have the character of a litany, such as the *Kyrie* and the *Agnus Dei*, are clearly intended to be sung in this manner. Other Mass parts may also be sung in dialogue or alternation, especially the *Gloria*, the Creed, and the three processional songs: the Entrance, the Preparation of the Gifts, and Communion. This approach often takes the form of a congregational refrain with verses sung by the choir. Choirs may also enrich congregational singing by adding harmonies and descants.

30. At times, the choir performs its ministry by singing alone. The choir may draw on the treasury of sacred music, singing compositions by composers of various periods and in various musical styles, as well as music that expresses the faith of the various cultures that enrich the Church. Appropriate times where the choir might commonly sing alone include a prelude before Mass, the Entrance chant, the Preparation of the Gifts, during the Communion procession or after the reception of Communion, and the recessional. Other appropriate examples are given in the section of this document entitled “Music and the Structure of the Mass” (nos. 137-199). The music of the choir must always be appropriate to the Liturgy, either by being a proper liturgical text or by expressing themes appropriate to the Liturgy.

31. When the choir is not exercising its particular role, it joins the congregation in song. The choir’s role in this case is not to lead congregational singing, but to sing with the congregation, which sings on its own or under the leadership of the organ or other instruments.

32. Choir members, like all liturgical ministers, should exercise their ministry with evident faith and should participate in the entire liturgical celebration, recognizing that they are servants of the Liturgy and members of the gathered assembly.

33. Choir and ensemble members may dress in albs or choir robes, but always in clean, presentable, and modest clothing. Cassock and surplice, being clerical attire, are not recommended as choir vesture.

### *The Psalmist*

34. The psalmist, or “cantor of the psalm,” proclaims the Psalm after the first reading and leads the gathered assembly in singing the refrain.<sup>42</sup> The psalmist may also, when necessary, intone the Gospel Acclamation and verse.<sup>43</sup> Although this ministry is distinct from the role of the cantor, the two ministries are often entrusted to the same person.

35. Persons designated for the ministry of psalmist should possess “the ability for singing and a facility in correct pronunciation and diction.”<sup>44</sup> As one who proclaims the Word, the psalmist should be able to proclaim the text of the Psalm with clarity, conviction, and sensitivity to the text, the musical setting, and those who are listening.

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<sup>42</sup> LFM, no. 56.

<sup>43</sup> See LFM, no. 56.

<sup>44</sup> GIRM, no. 102. See LFM, no. 56.

36. The psalmist sings the verses of the Responsorial Psalm from the ambo or another suitable place.<sup>45</sup> The psalmist may dress in an alb or choir robe, but always wears clean, presentable, and modest clothing. Cassock and surplice, being clerical attire, are not recommended as vesture for the psalmist.

### *The Cantor*

37. The cantor is both a singer and a leader of congregational song. Especially when no choir is present, the cantor may sing in alternation or dialogue with the assembly. For example, the cantor may sing the invocations of the *Kyrie*, intone the *Gloria*, lead the short acclamations at the end of the Scripture readings, intone and sing the verse of the Gospel Acclamation, sing the invocations of the Prayer of the Faithful, and lead the singing of the *Agnus Dei*. The cantor may also sing the verses of the psalm or song that accompany the Entrance, Preparation of the Gifts, and Communion. Finally, the cantor may serve as psalmist, leading and proclaiming the verses of the Responsorial Psalm.

38. As a leader of congregational song, the cantor should take part in singing with the entire gathered assembly. In order to promote the singing of the liturgical assembly, the cantor's voice should not be heard above the congregation. As a transitional practice, the voice of the cantor might need to be amplified to stimulate and lead congregational singing when this is still weak. However, as the congregation finds its voice and sings with increasing confidence, the cantor's voice should correspondingly recede. At times, it may be appropriate to use a modest gesture that invites participation and clearly indicates when the congregation is to begin, but gestures should be used sparingly and only when genuinely needed.

39. Cantors should lead the assembly from a place where they can be seen by all without drawing attention from the liturgical action. When, however, a congregation is singing very familiar responses, acclamations, or songs that do not include verses for the cantor alone, the cantor need not be visible.

40. The cantor exercises his or her ministry from a conveniently located stand, but not from the ambo.<sup>46</sup> The cantor may dress in an alb or choir robe, but always in clean, presentable, and modest clothing. Cassock and surplice, being clerical attire, are not recommended as vesture for the cantor.

### *The Organist and the Other Instrumentalists*

41. The primary role of the organist, other instrumentalists, or instrumental ensemble is to lead and sustain the singing of the assembly and of the choir, cantor, and psalmist, without dominating or overpowering them.

42. The many voices of the organ and of instrumental ensembles, with their great range of expression, add varied and colorful dimensions to the song of the assembly, especially with the addition of harmonization.

43. Those with the requisite talent and training should be encouraged to continue the musical tradition of improvisation. The liturgical action may call for improvisation, for example, when a congregational hymn or choral piece concludes before the ritual action is completed. The art of improvisation requires its own special talent and training. More than mere background sound is called for. When worthy

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<sup>45</sup> See GIRM, no. 61.

<sup>46</sup> See LFM, no. 33.

improvisation is not possible, it is recommended that musicians play quality published literature, which is available at all levels of difficulty.

44. There are also times when the organ or other instruments may be played alone, such as a prelude before the Mass, an instrumental piece during the Preparation of the Gifts, a recessional if there is no closing song, or a postlude following a closing song.

### *The Director of Music Ministries*

45. A professional director of music ministries, or music director, provides a major service by working with the bishop or pastor to oversee the planning, coordination, and ministries of the parish or diocesan liturgical music program. The director of music ministries fosters the active participation of the liturgical assembly in singing; coordinates the preparation of music to be sung at various liturgical celebrations; and promotes the ministries of choirs, psalmists, cantors, organists, and all who play instruments that serve the Liturgy. In the present day, many potential directors of music are not of our faith tradition. It is significant as we go forward that directors of music are properly trained to express our faith traditions effectively and with pastoral sensitivity.

46. Since every ministry is rooted in the Sacraments of Initiation, which form the People of God into “a community of disciples formed by and for the mission of Christ,”<sup>47</sup> the director of music ministries has a role that “finds its place within the communion of the Church and serves the mission of Christ in the Spirit.”<sup>48</sup>

47. Directors of music ministries and other lay ecclesial ministers exercise their role in relation both to the ordained and to the community of the faithful. Directors are collaborators with bishops, priests, and deacons, who exercise a pastoral ministry based on the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which configures them to Christ the Head and consecrates them for a role that is unique and necessary for the communion of the Church.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, lay ecclesial ministers are members of the lay faithful, “sharing in the common priesthood of all the baptized” and “called to discipleship.”<sup>50</sup>

## F. Leadership and Formation

48. The whole assembly is actively involved in the music of the Liturgy. Some members of the community, however, are recognized for the special gifts they exhibit in leading the musical praise and thanksgiving of Christian assemblies. These are the liturgical musicians, as described in section E, above, and their ministry is especially cherished by the Church.

49. Liturgical musicians are first of all disciples, and only then are they ministers. Joined to Christ through the Sacraments of Initiation, musicians belong to the assembly of the baptized faithful; they are worshipers above all else. Like other baptized members of the assembly, pastoral musicians need to hear the Gospel, experience conversion, profess faith in Christ, and so proclaim the praise of God. Thus,

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<sup>47</sup> USCCB, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry* (CVL) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 21.

<sup>48</sup> CVL, 17.

<sup>49</sup> See CVL, 21ff.; CCC, no. 1581.

<sup>50</sup> CVL, 25.

musicians who serve the Church at prayer are not merely employees or volunteers. They are ministers who share the faith, serve the community, and express the love of God and neighbor through music.

50. All pastoral musicians—professional or volunteer, full-time or part-time, director or choir member, cantor or instrumentalist—exercise a genuine liturgical ministry.<sup>51</sup> The community of the faithful has a right to expect that this service will be provided competently. Pastoral musicians should receive appropriate formation that is based on their baptismal call to discipleship; that grounds them in a love for and knowledge of Scripture, Catholic teaching, Liturgy, and music; and that equips them with the musical, liturgical, and pastoral skills to serve the Church at prayer.

51. Preparation for music ministry should include appropriate human formation, spiritual formation, intellectual formation, and pastoral formation.<sup>52</sup> Bishops and pastors should encourage liturgical musicians to take part in ministerial formation opportunities offered by universities, colleges, seminaries, ministry formation programs, dioceses, and national ministry associations. Parishes and dioceses should provide the financial support needed to ensure competent liturgical musical leadership.

52. The service of pastoral musicians should be recognized as a valued and integral part of the overall pastoral ministry of the parish or diocese; provision should be made for just compensation. Professional directors of music ministries and part-time pastoral music ministers should each receive appropriate wages and benefits that affirm the dignity of their work.<sup>53</sup>

53. Liturgical music ministers should be provided with the proper resources to carry out their administrative functions in a professional manner.

## **G. Music in Catholic Schools**

54. Catholic educational institutions have a special obligation toward music and the Sacred Liturgy. Catholic schools are called to foster the joy of singing and making music, to cultivate the repertoire of sacred music inherited from the past, to engage the creative efforts of contemporary composers and the diverse repertoires of various cultures, and to celebrate the Sacred Liturgy worthily.

55. Catholic grade schools and high schools, which sometimes have students from several parishes and a variety of faith traditions, should at a minimum help all of their students to become singers. Singing should be a regular part of the school day, e.g., in homeroom, in music classes, and at school assemblies. School Liturgies, while appropriate to the age level of the participants, should follow the prescriptions of nos. 110-114 in this document, and the other relevant guidelines on sacred music. Choirs should be promoted, and their ministry should be employed regularly at school Liturgies in accord with nos. 28-33. A variety of musical styles is recommended at school Liturgies, while care should be taken to include selections from the repertoire typically sung by the wider Church at Sunday Liturgies. In this way, students will be introduced to music they will sing throughout their life, and they will be better prepared for their eventual role as adult members of the worshiping assembly.

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<sup>51</sup> See SC, no. 29.

<sup>52</sup> CVL, 33-53.

<sup>53</sup> CVL, 63.

56. Catholic colleges and universities show that they come “from the heart of the Church”<sup>54</sup> especially in their worthy celebration of the Church’s Liturgy, which should be a priority at every Catholic school. Catholic institutions of higher education should cultivate a high level of musical skill and a broad range of repertoire at campus Liturgies, and they should strive to make use of the talents of the entire academic community, especially music students and faculty, while taking care to include selections from the repertoire typically sung by the wider Church at Sunday Liturgies.

## H. Diverse Cultures and Languages

57. Even as the liturgical music of the Western European tradition is to be remembered, cherished, and used, the rich cultural and ethnic heritage of the many peoples of our country must also be recognized, fostered, and celebrated. Cultural pluralism has been the common heritage of all Americans, and “the Catholic community is rapidly re-encountering itself as an immigrant Church.”<sup>55</sup> “The cultural gifts of the new immigrants” are “taking their place alongside those of older generations of immigrants,”<sup>56</sup> and this calls for interaction and collaboration between peoples who speak various languages and celebrate their faith in the songs and musical styles of their cultural, ethnic, and racial roots. In order to do so effectively, music publishers need to be encouraged to offer multilingual options for use which would be more expressive of our unity amidst such great diversity.

58. Liturgical music must always be chosen and sung “with due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly.”<sup>57</sup> Immigrants should be welcomed and should be provided with the resources they need to worship in their own language. “Religious singing by the faithful is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises as well as in liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may be heard, in conformity with the norms and requirements of the rubrics.”<sup>58</sup> However, as the second generation of an immigrant group comes to maturity in the worshiping assembly, bilingual (native language and English) resources and songs are needed to promote participation of the multicultural and multigenerational assembly.

59. As dioceses, parishes, and neighborhoods become increasingly diverse, the different cultural groups strive for some expression of unity. In a spirit of hospitality, local worshiping communities are encouraged to develop bicultural or multicultural celebrations from time to time that reflect the changing face of the Church in America. When prepared with an attitude of mutual reciprocity, local communities might eventually expand from those celebrations that merely highlight their multicultural differences to celebrations that better reflect the intercultural relationships of the assembly and the unity that is shared in Christ. Likewise, the valuable musical gifts of the diverse cultural and ethnic communities should enrich the whole Church in the United States by contributing to the repertory of liturgical song and to the growing richness of Christian faith.

60. Liturgical music today must reflect the multicultural diversity and intercultural relationships of the members of the gathered liturgical assembly. The varied use of musical forms such as ostinato refrains, call and response, song translations, and bilingual or multilingual repertoire can assist in weaving the

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<sup>54</sup> See John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae (On Catholic Colleges and Universities)* (1990).

<sup>55</sup> USCCB, *Welcoming the Stranger: Unity in Diversity* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2000), 7.

<sup>56</sup> *Welcoming the Stranger*, 16.

<sup>57</sup> GIRM, no. 40.

<sup>58</sup> SC, no. 118.

diverse languages and ethnicities of the liturgical assembly into a tapestry of sung praise. Liturgical leaders and musicians should encourage not only the use of traditional music of other languages and peoples, but also the incorporation of newly composed liturgical music appropriate to various cultural expressions in harmony with the theological meaning of the rites. Care should be taken, however, to choose appropriate hymns in other languages so as to avoid an expression that could be misconstrued as tokenism.

## I. Latin in the Liturgy

61. The use of the vernacular is the norm in most liturgical celebrations in the dioceses of the United States “for the sake of a better comprehension of the mystery being celebrated.”<sup>59</sup> However, care should be taken to foster the role of Latin in the Liturgy, particularly in liturgical song. Pastors should ensure “that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.”<sup>60</sup> They should be able to sing these parts of the Mass proper to them, at least according to the simpler melodies.

62. At international and multicultural gatherings of different language groups, it is most appropriate to celebrate the Liturgy in Latin, “with the exception of the readings, the homily and the prayer of the faithful.”<sup>61</sup> In addition, “selections of Gregorian chant should be sung” at such gatherings, whenever possible.<sup>62</sup>

63. To facilitate the singing of texts in Latin, the singers should be trained in its correct pronunciation and understand its meaning. To the greatest extent possible and applicable, singers and choir directors are encouraged to deepen their familiarity with the Latin language.

64. Whenever the Latin language poses an obstacle to singers, even after sufficient training has been provided—for example, in pronunciation, understanding of the text, or confident rendition of a piece—it would be more prudent to employ a vernacular language in the Liturgy.

65. Seminarians should “receive the preparation needed to understand and to celebrate Mass in Latin, and also to use Latin texts and execute Gregorian chant.”<sup>63</sup>

66. In promoting the use of Latin in the Liturgy, pastors should always “employ that form of participation which best matches the capabilities of each congregation.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> GIRM, no. 12.

<sup>60</sup> SC, no. 54; see MS, no. 47; Sacred Congregation for Rites, *Inter Oecumenici (Instruction on the Proper Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)*, no. 59, in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*.

<sup>61</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis (The Sacrament of Charity)* (SacCar) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2007), no. 62.

<sup>62</sup> SacCar, no. 62.

<sup>63</sup> SacCar, no. 62.

<sup>64</sup> MS, no. 47.

### III. THE MUSIC OF CATHOLIC WORSHIP

#### A. Different Kinds of Music for the Liturgy

##### *Music for the Sacred Liturgy*

67. "Sacred music is to be considered the more holy the more closely connected it is with the liturgical action, whether making prayer more pleasing, promoting unity of minds, or conferring greater solemnity upon the sacred rites."<sup>65</sup> This holiness involves *ritual* and *spiritual* dimensions, both of which must be considered within *cultural* context.

68. The *ritual dimension* of sacred music refers to those ways in which it is "connected with the liturgical action" so that it accords with the structure of the Liturgy and expresses the shape of the rite. The musical setting must allow the rite to unfold with the proper participation of the assembly and its ministers, without overshadowing the words and actions of the Liturgy.

69. The *spiritual dimension* of sacred music refers to its inner qualities that enable it to add greater depth to prayer, unity to the assembly, or dignity to the ritual. Sacred music is holy when it mediates the holiness of God and forms the Holy People of God more fully into communion with him and with each other in Christ.

70. The *cultural context* refers to the setting in which the ritual and spiritual dimensions come into play. Factors such as the age, spiritual heritage, and cultural and ethnic background of a given liturgical assembly must be considered. The choice of individual compositions for congregational participation will often depend on those ways in which a particular group finds it best to join their hearts and minds to the liturgical action.

71. With gratitude to the Creator for giving humanity such a rich diversity of musical styles, the Church seeks to employ only that which, in a given style, meets the ritual-spiritual demands of the Liturgy. In discerning the sacred quality of liturgical music, liturgical musicians will find guidance in music from the Church's treasury of sacred music, which is of inestimable value and which past generations have found suitable for worship.<sup>66</sup> They also should strive to promote a fruitful dialogue between the Church and the modern world.<sup>67</sup>

##### *Gregorian Chant*

72. "The Church recognizes Gregorian chant as being specially suited to the Roman Liturgy. Therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services."<sup>68</sup> Gregorian chant is uniquely the Church's own music. Chant is a living connection with our forebears in the faith, the traditional music of the Roman rite, a sign of communion with the universal Church, a bond of unity

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<sup>65</sup> SC, no. 112.

<sup>66</sup> See SC, no. 112.

<sup>67</sup> "New art forms adapted to our times and in keeping with the characteristics of different nations and regions should be acknowledged by the Church. They may also be brought into the sanctuary whenever they raise the mind up to God with suitable forms of expression and in conformity with liturgical requirements" (GS, no. 62).

<sup>68</sup> SC, no. 116.

across cultures, a means for diverse communities to participate together in song, and a summons to contemplative participation in the Liturgy.

73. The “pride of place” given to Gregorian chant by the Second Vatican Council is modified by the important phrase “other things being equal.”<sup>69</sup> These “other things” are the important liturgical and pastoral concerns facing every bishop, pastor, and liturgical musician. In considering the use of the treasures of chant, pastors and liturgical musicians should take care that the congregation is able to participate in the Liturgy with song. They should be sensitive to the cultural and spiritual milieu of their communities, in order to build up the Church in unity and peace.

74. The Second Vatican Council directed that the faithful be able to sing parts of the Ordinary of the Mass together in Latin.<sup>70</sup> In many worshiping communities in the United States, fulfilling this directive will mean introducing Latin chant to worshipers who perhaps have not sung it before. While prudence, pastoral sensitivity, and reasonable time for progress are encouraged to achieve this end, every effort in this regard is laudable and highly encouraged.

75. Each worshiping community in the United States, including all age groups and all ethnic groups, should, at a minimum, learn *Kyrie XVI*, *Sanctus XVIII*, and *Agnus Dei XVIII*, all of which are typically included in congregational worship aids. More difficult chants, such as *Gloria VIII* and settings of the *Credo* and *Pater Noster*, might be learned after the easier chants have been mastered.<sup>71</sup>

76. “The assembly of the faithful should participate in singing the Proper of the Mass as much as possible, especially through simple responses and other suitable settings.”<sup>72</sup> When the congregation does not sing an antiphon or hymn, proper chants from the *Graduale Romanum* might be sung by a choir that is able to render these challenging pieces well. As an easier alternative, chants of the *Graduale Simplex* are recommended. Whenever a choir sings in Latin, it is helpful to provide the congregation with a vernacular translation so that they are able to “unite themselves interiorly” to what the choir sings.<sup>73</sup>

77. The Entrance and Communion antiphons are found in their proper place in the *Roman Missal*. Composers seeking to create vernacular translations of the appointed antiphons and psalms may also draw from the *Graduale Romanum*, either in their entirety or in shortened refrains for the congregation or choir.

78. Gregorian chant draws its life from the sacred text it expresses, and recent official chant editions employ revised notation suggesting natural speech rhythm rather than independent melodic principles.<sup>74</sup> Singers are encouraged to adopt a manner of singing sensitive to the Latin text.

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<sup>69</sup> MS, no. 50a, further specifies that chant has pride of place “in sung liturgical services celebrated in Latin.”

<sup>70</sup> “Steps should be taken enabling the faithful to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass belonging to them” (SC, no. 54).

<sup>71</sup> See GIRM, no. 41. Further resources for congregational Latin chant are *Iubilate Deo* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1986) and *Liber Cantualis* (Sable-sur-Sarthe, France: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1983).

<sup>72</sup> MS, no. 33.

<sup>73</sup> MS, no. 15.

<sup>74</sup> The Praenotanda to the 1983 *Liber Hymnarius* explains the flexible rhythms intended by the revised notation.

79. Missals in various languages provide vernacular chants inspired by Latin chant, or other melodies, for sung responses between ministers and people. For the sake of unity across the Church, musicians should not take it upon themselves to adjust or alter these melodies locally.

80. Whenever strophic chant hymns are published with Latin or vernacular texts, their melodies should be drawn from the *Liber Hymnarius*.

### *The Composer and Music of Our Day*

81. The Church needs artists, and artists need the Church. In every age, the Church has called upon creative artists to give new voice to praise and prayer. Throughout history, God has continued to breathe forth his creative Spirit, making noble the work of musicians' hearts and hands. The forms of expression have been many and varied.

82. The Church has safeguarded and celebrated these expressions for centuries. In our own day, she continues to desire to bring forth the new with the old. The Church joyfully urges composers and text writers to draw upon their special genius so that she can continue to augment the treasure house of sacred musical art.<sup>75</sup>

83. The Church never ceases to find new ways to sing her love for God each new day. The Sacred Liturgy itself, in its actions and prayers, best makes known the forms in which compositions will continue to evolve. Composers find their inspiration in Sacred Scripture, and especially in the texts of the Sacred Liturgy, so that their works flow from the Liturgy itself.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, "to be suitable for use in the Liturgy, a sung text must not only be doctrinally correct, but must in itself be an expression of the Catholic faith." Therefore, "liturgical songs must never be permitted to make statements about faith which are untrue."<sup>77</sup> Only within this scriptural, liturgical, and creedal context is the composer who is aware of the Church's long journey through human history and "who is profoundly steeped in the *sensus Ecclesiae*" properly equipped "to perceive and express in melody the truth of the Mystery that is celebrated in the Liturgy."<sup>78</sup> No matter what the genre of music, liturgical beauty emanates directly from that mystery and is passed through the talents of composers to emerge in music of the assembled People of God.

84. In the years immediately following the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council, especially because of the introduction of vernacular language, composers and publishers worked to provide a new repertoire of music for indigenous language(s). In subsequent decades, this effort has matured, and a

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<sup>75</sup> "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old" (Mt 13:52); see USCCB, *Directory on Music and the Liturgy*, draft awaiting confirmation from the Holy See.

<sup>76</sup> Pope John Paul II voiced the charism and praised the work of creative artists in his 1999 *Letter to Artists* (LTA): "None can sense more deeply than you artists, ingenious creators of beauty that you are, something of the pathos with which God at the dawn of creation looked upon the work of his hands. A glimmer of that feeling has shone so often in your eyes when—like the artists of every age— . . . you have admired the work of your inspiration, sensing in it some echo of the mystery of creation with which God, the sole creator of all things, has wished in some way to associate you" (no. 1, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_23041999\\_artists\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists_en.html)).

<sup>77</sup> USCCB, *Directory on Music and the Liturgy* (2006), draft awaiting confirmation from the Holy See.

<sup>78</sup> Pope John Paul II, Chirograph of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini (On Sacred Music)*, no. 12, [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_20031203\\_musicasacra\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20031203_musicasacra_en.html).

body of worthy vernacular liturgical music continues to develop, even though much of the early music has fallen into disuse. Today, as they continue to serve the Church at prayer, composers are encouraged to concentrate on craftsmanship and artistic excellence in all musical genres.

85. The Church awaits an ever richer song of her entire gathered people. “The faith of countless believers has been nourished by melodies flowing from the hearts of other believers, either introduced into the Liturgy or used as an aid to dignified worship. In song, faith is experienced as vibrant joy, love, and confident expectation of the saving intervention of God.”<sup>79</sup>

## **B. Instruments**

### *The Human Voice*

86. Of all the sounds of which human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are capable, voice is the most privileged and fundamental. Musical instruments in the Liturgy are best understood as an extension of and support to the primary liturgical instrument, which is the human voice.

### *Musical Instruments*

87. Among all other instruments which are suitable for divine worship, the organ is “accorded pride of place”<sup>80</sup> because of its capacity to sustain the singing of a large gathered assembly, due to both its size and its ability to give “resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to lamentation.” Likewise, “the manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God.”<sup>81</sup>

88. In addition to its ability to lead and sustain congregational singing, the sound of the pipe organ is most suited for solo playing of sacred music in the Liturgy at appropriate moments. Pipe organs also play an important evangelical role in the Church’s outreach to the wider community in sacred concerts, music series, and other musical and cultural programs. For all of these reasons, the place of the organ should be taken into account from the outset in the planning process for the building or renovation of churches.

89. However, from the days when the Ark of the Covenant was accompanied in procession by cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets, God’s people have, in various periods, used a variety of musical instruments to sing his praise.<sup>82</sup> Each of these instruments, born of the culture and the traditions of a particular people, has given voice to a wide variety of forms and styles through which Christ’s faithful continue to join their voices to his perfect song of praise upon the Cross.

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<sup>79</sup> LTA, no. 12.

<sup>80</sup> GIRM, no. 393.

<sup>81</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Greeting of the Holy Father on the Occasion of Blessing of the New Organ at Regensburg’s Alte Kapelle, Regensburg, Germany (September 13, 2006), [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_benxvi\\_spe\\_20060913\\_alte-kapelle-regensburg\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_benxvi_spe_20060913_alte-kapelle-regensburg_en.html).

<sup>82</sup> 1 Chr 15:20-21

90. Many other instruments also enrich the celebration of the Liturgy, such as wind, stringed, or percussion instruments “according to longstanding local usage, provided they are truly apt for sacred use or can be rendered apt.”<sup>83</sup>

### *Instrumental Music*

91. Although instruments are used in Christian worship primarily to lead and sustain the singing of assembly, choir, psalmist, and cantor, they may also, when appropriate, be played by themselves. Such instrumental music can assist the gathering assembly in preparing for worship in the form of a prelude. It may give voice to the sentiments of the human heart through pieces played during the Liturgy and postludes after the Liturgy. Instrumentalists are to remember that the Liturgy calls for significant periods of silent reflection. Silence need not always be filled.

92. Instrumentalists are encouraged to play pieces from the treasury of sacred music by composers of various eras and cultures. In addition, those with the requisite talent and training are encouraged to improvise, as described in no. 43.

### *Recorded Music*

93. Recorded music lacks the authenticity provided by a living liturgical assembly gathered for the Sacred Liturgy. While recorded music might be used advantageously outside the Liturgy as an aid in the teaching of new music, it should not, as a general norm, be used within the Liturgy.

94. Some exceptions to this principle should be noted. Recorded music may be used to accompany the community’s song during a procession outside and, when used carefully, in Masses with children. Occasionally, it might be used as an aid to prayer, for example, during long periods of silence in a communal celebration of reconciliation. However, recorded music should never become a substitute for the community’s singing.

## C. Location of Musicians and Their Instruments

95. Musicians and musical instruments should be located so as to enable proper interaction with the liturgical action, with the rest of the assembly, and among the various musicians. Ideally, ministers of music are located so as to enable their own full participation by being able to see and hear the Liturgy. In most cases, it will work best if musicians are in close proximity with each other—for example, by placing the organ console or keyboard close to the choir and to the cantor’s stand.

96. When not engaged in the direct exercise of their particular role, music ministers, like all ministers of the Liturgy, remain attentive members of the gathered assembly and should never constitute a distraction.

97. The cantor should generally be located in front of the congregation to lead the singing. When a congregation is able to sing on its own, either in response to the priest or ministers or through instrumental leadership, the cantor does not need to be visible. The Responsorial Psalm is usually proclaimed from the ambo or another location that is visible to the assembly. The psalmist, therefore, should sit in a place where the ambo is easily accessible.

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<sup>83</sup> GIRM, no. 393.

98. The placement of the choir should show the choir members' presence as a part of the worshiping community, yet serving in a unique way. Acoustical considerations will also play a role in determining the best location for the choir.

99. Placement of the organ console and pipes, speakers of amplified instruments, and acoustic instruments such as the piano is determined both by visual considerations, so that there is no distraction from the liturgical action, and by acoustical considerations, so that the sound can support the congregation and so that the instrumentalist is readily able to accompany cantors, psalmists, and choirs.

100. If the space occupied by the choir and instruments is visible to the assembly, it must reflect the sacredness of the music ministry. Any appearance of clutter or disorganization must be avoided. Just as no one would tolerate stacks of books and papers in the sanctuary, the music ministry space should be free from clutter.

## **D. Acoustics**

101. Acoustics refers to the quality of a space for sustaining sound, especially its generation, transmission, and reception. While individual ministers of the Liturgy, ensembles, and even choirs can be sound-enhanced through amplification methods, the only amplification of the singing assembly comes from the room itself. Given the primacy of the assembly's song among all musical elements of the Liturgy, the acoustical properties of the worship space are critical. For this reason, specialists in acoustics should be consulted when building or modifying liturgical space.

102. If each member of the assembly senses his or her voice joined to the entire community in a swell of collective sound, the acoustics are well suited to the purpose of a gathered community engaged in sung prayer. If, on the other hand, each person hears primarily only his or her own voice, the acoustics of the space are fundamentally deficient.

103. Sound-absorbing building materials include carpet, porous ceiling tiles, soft wood, untreated soft stone, cast concrete or cinder block, and padded seating. Avoiding excessive use of such materials makes it easier to achieve the ideal of many voices united in song.<sup>84</sup>

104. The acoustics of a church or chapel should be resonant so that there is no need for excessive amplification of musical sound in order to fill the space and support the assembly's song. When the acoustics of the building naturally support sound, acoustic instruments and choirs generally need no amplification. An acoustically dead space precipitates a high cost of sound reinforcement, even for the organ.

## **E. Copyrights and Participation Aids**

105. Many published works are protected by national and international copyright laws, which are intended to ensure that composers, text writers, publishers, and their employees receive a fair return for their work. Churches and other institutions have a legal and moral obligation to seek proper permissions and to pay for reprinting of published works when required, even if copies are intended only for the use of the congregation.

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<sup>84</sup> See USCCB, *Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship* (BLS) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2000), no. 200.

106. Many publishers provide licenses and other convenient ways for obtaining permission for reprinting texts and music for the use of a liturgical assembly. Pastors, directors of music ministries, and other pastoral musicians need to be informed about the legal requirements for copying printed and recorded music, and they should act with a sense of justice.

107. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has delegated to the Committee on Divine Worship the responsibility of overseeing the publication of liturgical books that describe and guide the reformed rites developed in the years since the Second Vatican Council. In light of this responsibility, *Guidelines for the Publication of Participation Aids* has been developed for publishers of popular participation materials.

108. Hymns, songs, and acclamations written for the liturgical assembly are approved for use in the Liturgy by the bishop of the diocese wherein they are published, in order to ensure that these texts truly express the faith of the Church with theological accuracy and are appropriate to the liturgical context.

109. Composers who set liturgical texts to musical settings must respect the integrity of the approved text. Only with the approval of the USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship may minor adaptations be made to approved liturgical texts.<sup>85</sup>

## IV. PREPARING MUSIC FOR CATHOLIC WORSHIP

### A. What Parts Do We Sing?

#### *The Principle of Progressive Solemnity*

110. Music should be considered a normal and ordinary part of the Church's liturgical life. However, the use of music in the Liturgy is always governed by the principle of progressive solemnity.

111. Progressive solemnity means that "between the solemn, fuller form of liturgical celebration, in which everything that demands singing is in fact sung, and the simplest form, in which singing is not used, there can be various degrees according to the greater or lesser place allotted to singing."<sup>86</sup>

112. Progressive solemnity includes not only the nature and style of the music, but how many and which parts of the rite are to be sung. For example, greater feasts such as Easter Sunday or Pentecost might suggest a chanted Gospel, but a recited Gospel might be more appropriate for Ordinary Time. Musical selections and the use of additional instruments reflect the season of the liturgical year or feast that is being celebrated.

113. Solemnities and feasts invite more solemnity. Certain musical selections are more capable of expressing this solemnity, adding an extraordinary richness to these special celebrations. Such solemnity should never be allowed to devolve to an empty display of ceremony, however.<sup>87</sup> The most solemn

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<sup>85</sup> See Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL), *Policy for Approval of Sung Settings of Liturgical Texts*, in *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2004), 1527-1528.

<sup>86</sup> MS, no. 7. See *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours* (GILH) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002), nos. 271-273.

<sup>87</sup> "It should be borne in mind that the true solemnity of liturgical worship depends less on a more ornate form of singing and a more magnificent ceremonial than on its worthy and religious celebration, which takes into account

musical expressions retain their primary responsibility of engaging human hearts in the mystery of Christ that is being celebrated on a particular occasion by the Church.

114. At other times, the liturgical season calls for a certain musical restraint. In Advent, for example, musical instruments should be used with moderation and should not anticipate the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord. In Lent, musical instruments should be used only to support the singing of the gathered assembly.<sup>88</sup>

### *The Parts to Be Sung*

115. Singing by the gathered assembly and ministers is important at all celebrations. Not every part that can be sung should necessarily be sung at every celebration; rather “preference should be given to those [parts] that are of greater importance.”<sup>89</sup>

#### a. Dialogues and Acclamations

Among the parts to be sung, preference should be given “especially to those to be sung by the priest or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the priest and people together.”<sup>90</sup> This includes dialogues such as *God, come to my assistance. Lord make haste to help me* in the Office, or *The Lord be with you. And also with you* in the Mass. The dialogues of the Liturgy are fundamental because they “are not simply outward signs of communal celebration but foster and bring about communion between priest and people.”<sup>91</sup> By their nature, they are short and uncomplicated and easily invite active participation by the entire assembly. Every effort should therefore be made to introduce or strengthen as a normative practice the singing of the dialogues between the priest, deacon, or lector and the people. Even the priest with very limited singing ability is capable of chanting *The Lord be with you* on a single pitch.

The acclamations of the Eucharistic Liturgy and other rites arise from the whole gathered assembly as assents to God’s Word and action. The Eucharistic acclamations include the Gospel Acclamation, the *Sanctus*, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen. They are appropriately sung at any Mass, including daily Mass and any Mass with a smaller congregation. Ideally, the people should know the acclamations by heart and should be able to sing them readily, even without accompaniment.

#### b. Antiphons and Psalms

The psalms are poems of praise that are meant, whenever possible, to be sung.<sup>92</sup> The Psalter is the basic songbook of the Liturgy. Tertullian witnesses to this when he says that in the

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the integrity of the liturgical celebration itself, and the performance of each of its parts according to their own particular nature” (MS, no. 11).

<sup>88</sup> See GIRM, no. 313. Exceptions are *Laetare* Sunday, solemnities, and feasts, when a more abundant use of musical instruments is usually appropriate.

<sup>89</sup> GIRM, no. 40.

<sup>90</sup> GIRM, no. 40; MS, nos. 7 and 16.

<sup>91</sup> GIRM, no. 34.

<sup>92</sup> See GIRM, no. 102.

assemblies of the Christians, “the Scriptures are read, the psalms are sung, sermons are preached.”<sup>93</sup> Psalms have a prominent place in every Office of the Liturgy of the Hours.<sup>94</sup>

The Responsorial Psalm in the Liturgy of the Word of the Mass and of other rites “holds great liturgical and pastoral importance, because it fosters meditation on the word of God.”<sup>95</sup> The Entrance and Communion chants with their psalm verses serve to accompany the two most important processions of the Mass: the entrance procession, by which the Mass begins, and the Communion procession, by which the faithful approach the altar to receive Holy Communion. Participation in song on the part of the assembly is commended during both of these important processions, as the People of God gather at the beginning of Mass and as the faithful approach the holy altar to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord.

c. Refrains and Repeated Responses

The Liturgy also has texts of a litanic character that may be sung as appropriate. These include the *Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei* of the Mass, the response to the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass or the intercessions at Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, and the Litany of the Saints in various rites.

d. Hymns

A hymn is sung at each Office of the Liturgy of the Hours, which is the original place for strophic hymnody in the Liturgy. At Mass, in addition to the *Gloria* and a small number of strophic hymns in the *Roman Missal* and *Graduale Romanum*, congregational hymns of a particular nation or group that have been judged appropriate by the competent authorities mentioned in the GIRM, nos. 48, 74, and 87, may be admitted to the Sacred Liturgy. Church legislation today permits as an option the use of vernacular hymns at the Entrance, Preparation of the Gifts, Communion, and Recessional. Because these popular hymns are fulfilling a properly liturgical role, it is especially important that they be appropriate to the liturgical action. In accord with an uninterrupted history of nearly five centuries, nothing prevents the use of some congregational hymns coming from other Christian traditions, provided that their texts are in conformity with Catholic teaching and they are appropriate to the Catholic Liturgy.

116. At daily Mass, the above priorities should be followed as much as possible, in this order: dialogues and acclamations (Gospel Acclamation, *Sanctus*, Memorial Acclamation, *Amen*); litanies (*Kyrie*, *Agnus Dei*); Responsorial Psalm, perhaps in a simple chanted setting; and finally, a hymn or even two on more important days. Even when musical accompaniment is not possible, every attempt should be made to sing the acclamations and dialogues.

117. Proper antiphons from the liturgical books are to be esteemed and used especially because they are the very voice of God speaking to us in the Scriptures. Here, “the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them. And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigor, and the children of the Church as strength for their

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<sup>93</sup> MSD, no. 10; Tertullian, *De anima*, ch. 9; PL II, 701; and Apol. 39; PL I, 540.

<sup>94</sup> “In the liturgy of the hours the Church in large measure prays through the magnificent songs that the Old Testament authors composed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The origin of these verses gives them great power to raise the mind to God, to inspire devotion, to evoke gratitude in times of favor, and to bring consolation and courage in times of trial” (GILH, no. 100).

<sup>95</sup> GIRM, no. 61.

faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life.”<sup>96</sup> The Christian faithful are to be led to an ever deeper appreciation of the psalms as the voice of Christ and the voice of his Church at prayer.<sup>97</sup>

### *Sacred Silence*

118. Music arises out of silence and returns to silence. God is revealed both in the beauty of song and in the power of silence. The Sacred Liturgy has its rhythm of texts, actions, songs, and silence. Silence in the Liturgy allows the community to reflect on what it has heard and experienced, and to open its heart to the mystery celebrated. Ministers and pastoral musicians should take care that the rites unfold with the proper ebb and flow of sound and silence.<sup>98</sup> The importance of silence in the Liturgy cannot be overemphasized.

## **B. Who Prepares the Music for the Liturgy?**

119. Preparation for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, and particularly for the selection of what is to be sung at the Liturgy is ultimately the responsibility of the pastor and of the priest who will celebrate the Mass.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, “in planning the celebration of Mass, [the priest] should have in mind the common spiritual good of the people of God, rather than his own inclinations.”<sup>100</sup>

120. In order that there “be harmony and diligence in the effective preparation of each liturgical celebration in accord with the *Missal* and other liturgical books,”<sup>101</sup> the pastor may designate that the director of music or a Liturgy or music committee meet regularly to make the preparations necessary for a good use of the available liturgical and musical options.

121. When a Liturgy or music committee is chosen to prepare music for the Liturgy, it should include persons with the knowledge and artistic skills needed in celebration: men and women trained in Catholic theology, Liturgy, and liturgical music and familiar with current resources in these areas. It is always good to include as consultants some members of the worshiping assembly so that their perspective is represented.

## **C. Care in the Choice of Music for the Liturgy**

122. Music for the Liturgy must be carefully chosen and prepared. Such preparation should be characterized by “harmony and diligence . . . under the direction of the rector [or pastor] of the Church and after the consultation with the faithful about things that directly pertain to them.”<sup>102</sup> Effective

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<sup>96</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)* (DV) (1965), no. 21.

<sup>97</sup> “The praying of the psalms . . . must be grasped with new warmth by the people of God. This will be achieved more readily if a deeper understanding of the psalms, in the meaning in which they are used in the liturgy, is more diligently promoted among the clergy and communicated to all the faithful by means of appropriate catechesis” (Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Laudis canticum* [1970], no. 8).

<sup>98</sup> See nos. 91, 94, 151, 176, 199, 209, 215, 243, and 249.

<sup>99</sup> See GIRM, no. 111.

<sup>100</sup> GIRM, no. 352.

<sup>101</sup> GIRM, no. 111.

<sup>102</sup> GIRM, no. 111.

preparation of liturgical song that fosters the maximum participation of the gathered assembly is a cooperative venture that respects the essential role of a variety of persons with mutual competencies.

123. Each particular liturgical celebration is composed of many variable verbal and nonverbal elements: proper prayers, scriptural readings, the liturgical season, the time of day, processional movement, sacred objects and actions, the socio-economic context in which the particular community is set, or even particular events impacting the life of the Christian faithful. Every effort should be made to lend such disparate elements a certain unity by the skillful and sensitive selection and preparation of texts, music, homily, movement, vesture, color, environment, and sacred objects and actions. This kind of ritual art requires that those who prepare the Liturgy approach it with artistic sensitivity and pastoral perspective.

124. Music does what words alone cannot do. It is capable of expressing a dimension of meaning and feeling that words alone cannot convey. While this dimension of an individual musical composition is often difficult to describe, its affective power should be carefully considered along with its textual component.

125. The role of music is to serve the needs of the Liturgy and not to dominate it, seek to entertain, or draw attention to itself or the musicians. However, there are instances when the praise and adoration of God leads to music taking on a far greater dimension. At other times, simplicity is the most appropriate response. The primary role of music in the Liturgy is to help the members of the gathered assembly to join themselves with the action of Christ and to give voice to the gift of faith.

## **D. Judging the Qualities of Music for the Liturgy**

### *The Three Judgments: One Evaluation*

126. In judging the appropriateness of music for the Liturgy, one will examine its liturgical, pastoral, and musical qualities. Ultimately, however, these three judgments are but aspects of one evaluation, which answers the question: "Is this particular piece of music appropriate for this use in the particular Liturgy?" All three judgments must be considered together, and no individual judgment can be applied in isolation from the other two. This evaluation requires cooperation, consultation, collaboration, and mutual respect among those who are skilled in any of the three judgments, be they pastors, musicians, liturgists, or planners.

### *The Liturgical Judgment*

127. The question asked by this judgment may be stated as follows: Is this composition capable of meeting the structural and textual requirements set forth by the liturgical books for this particular rite?

128. Structural considerations depend on the demands of the rite itself to guide the choice of parts to be sung, taking into account the principle of progressive solemnity (see nos. 110ff. in this document). A certain balance among the various elements of the Liturgy should be sought, so that less important elements do not overshadow more important ones. Textual elements include the ability of a musical setting to support the liturgical text and to convey meaning faithful to the teaching of the Church.

129. A brief introduction to the aspects of music and the various liturgical rites is provided below in nos. 137ff. Pastoral musicians should develop a working familiarity with the requirements of each rite through a study of the liturgical books themselves.

### *The Pastoral Judgment*

130. The pastoral judgment takes into consideration the actual community gathered to celebrate in a particular place at a particular time. Does a musical composition promote the sanctification of the members of the liturgical assembly by drawing them closer to the holy mysteries being celebrated? Does it strengthen their formation in faith by opening their hearts to the mystery being celebrated on this occasion or in this season? Is it capable of expressing the faith that God has planted in their hearts and summoned them to celebrate?

131. In the dioceses of the United States of America today, liturgical assemblies are composed of people of many different nations. Such peoples often “have their own musical tradition, and this plays a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason their music should be held in proper esteem and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their religious sense but also in adapting worship to their native genius. . . .”<sup>103</sup>

132. Other factors—such as the age, culture, language, and education of a given liturgical assembly—must also be considered. Particular musical forms and the choice of individual compositions for congregational participation will often depend on those ways in which a particular group finds it easiest to join their hearts and minds to the liturgical action. Similarly, the musical experience of a given liturgical assembly is to be carefully considered, lest forms of musical expression that are alien to their way of worshiping be introduced precipitously. On the other hand, one should never underestimate the ability of persons of all ages, cultures, languages, and levels of education to learn something new and to understand things that are properly and thoroughly introduced.

133. The pastoral question, finally, is always the same: Will this composition draw this particular people closer to the mystery of Christ, which is at the heart of this liturgical celebration?

### *The Musical Judgment*

134. The musical judgment asks whether this composition has the necessary aesthetic qualities that can bear the weight of the mysteries celebrated in the Liturgy. It asks the question: Is this composition technically, aesthetically, and expressively worthy?

135. This judgment requires musical competence. Only artistically sound music will be effective and endure over time. To admit to the Liturgy the cheap, the trite, or the musical cliché often found in secular popular songs is to cheapen the Liturgy, to expose it to ridicule, and to invite failure.

136. Sufficiency of artistic expression, however, is not the same as musical style, for “the Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her own. She has admitted styles from every period, in keeping with the natural characteristics and conditions of peoples and the needs of the various rites.”<sup>104</sup> Thus, in recent times, the Church has consistently recognized and freely welcomed the use of various styles of music as an aid to liturgical worship.

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<sup>103</sup> SC, no. 119.

<sup>104</sup> SC, no. 123.

## V. THE MUSICAL STRUCTURE OF CATHOLIC WORSHIP

### A. Music and the Structure of the Mass

137. Those responsible for preparing music for the celebration of the Eucharist in accord with the three preceding judgments must have a clear understanding of the structure of the Liturgy. They must be aware of what is of primary importance. They should know the nature of each of the parts of the Mass and the relationship of each part to the overall rhythm of the liturgical action.

138. The Mass is made up of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Although each has its own distinctive character, these two parts are so closely connected as to form one act of worship. “The Church is nourished spiritually at the twofold table of God’s word and of the Eucharist:<sup>105</sup> from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness.”<sup>106</sup> In addition, the Mass has introductory and concluding rites.

#### *The Introductory Rites*

139. The first part of the Mass consists of rites that “have the character of a beginning, introduction, and preparation.”<sup>107</sup> They include an Entrance chant or song, the reverencing of the altar, a greeting of the people, an Act of Penitence and the *Kyrie* (or the Sprinkling Rite), *Gloria*, and *Collect*.

140. These rites are designed “to ensure that the faithful who come together as one establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God’s word and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.”<sup>108</sup> So that the people might come together as one, it is appropriate that they always sing at least one piece as a congregation in the introductory rites—Entrance song or chant, *Kyrie*, or *Gloria*—apart from the sung dialogues of the Liturgy.

141. On certain occasions, such as Palm Sunday, or when the other sacraments or rites are celebrated at Mass, some of these rites are omitted or celebrated in a particular manner that requires variations in the choice of music. Those responsible for the musical preparation of the Liturgy must be aware of these variations in practice.

#### The Entrance Chant or Song

142. After the entire liturgical assembly has been gathered, an Entrance chant or song is sung as the procession with the priest, deacon, and ministers enters the church. “The purpose of this chant is to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered, introduce their thoughts to the mystery of the liturgical season or festivity, and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers.”<sup>109</sup>

143. Care must be taken in the treatment of the texts of psalms, hymns, and songs in the Liturgy. Verses and stanzas should not be omitted arbitrarily in ways that risk distorting their content. While not all

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<sup>105</sup> See SC, no. 51; Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum Ordinis (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests)* (1965), no. 18; DV, no. 21; AG, no. 6; GIRM, no. 8.

<sup>106</sup> LFM, no. 10.

<sup>107</sup> GIRM, no. 46.

<sup>108</sup> GIRM, no. 46.

<sup>109</sup> GIRM, no. 47.

musical pieces require that all verses or stanzas be sung, verses should be omitted only if the text to be sung forms a coherent whole.

144. The text and music for the Entrance song may be drawn from a number of sources.

- a. The singing of an antiphon and psalm during the entrance procession has been a longstanding tradition in the Roman Liturgy. Antiphons and psalms may be drawn from the official liturgical books—the *Graduale Romanum*, or the *Graduale Simplex*—or from other collections of antiphons and psalms.
- b. Other hymns and songs may also be sung at the Entrance, providing that they are in keeping with the purpose of the Entrance chant or song. The texts of antiphons, psalms, hymns, and songs for the Liturgy must have been approved either by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or by the local diocesan bishop.<sup>110</sup>

#### The Act of Penitence

145. After the greeting, the Act of Penitence follows as the entire assembly prays a formula of general confession.<sup>111</sup> When the third form of the Act of Penitence is sung (“You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy . . .”) variable invocations of Christ’s mercy may be chosen.<sup>112</sup>

#### The Kyrie Eleison

146. The ancient invocation *Kyrie* is a “chant by which the faithful acclaim the Lord and implore his mercy.”<sup>113</sup> If the *Kyrie* is not included in the Act of Penitence, it is sung or said immediately afterwards. It is usually sung in dialogue by the entire liturgical assembly with the choir or cantor.

#### The Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

147. “On Sundays, especially in the Season of Easter, in place of the customary Act of Penitence, from time to time the blessing and sprinkling of water to recall Baptism may take place.”<sup>114</sup> The blessing of the water may be sung. The song accompanying the sprinkling with blessed water should have an explicitly baptismal character.

#### The Gloria

148. “The *Gloria* is a very ancient and venerable hymn in which the Church, gathered together in the Holy Spirit, glorifies and entreats God the Father and the Lamb. The text of this hymn may not be

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<sup>110</sup> “The singing at this time is done either alternately by the choir and the people or in a similar way by the cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone. In the dioceses of the United States of America there are four options for the Entrance Chant (song): (1) the antiphon from the *Roman Missal* or the Psalm from the *Roman Gradual* as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the *Simple Gradual*; (3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop, including psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) a suitable liturgical song similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the diocesan Bishop” (GIRM, no. 48).

<sup>111</sup> See GIRM, no. 51.

<sup>112</sup> See GIRM, no. 52.

<sup>113</sup> GIRM, no. 52.

<sup>114</sup> GIRM, no. 51; see *The Roman Missal*, Appendix II.

replaced by any other text. . . . It is sung or said on Sundays outside the Seasons of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, and at special celebrations of a more solemn character.<sup>115</sup>

149. The priest, or the cantor or choir, intones the *Gloria*. It is sung by all, by the people alternately with the choir or cantor, or by the choir alone. If not sung, it is recited either by all together or by two parts of the congregation in alternation. “The addition of refrains to the Glory to God is permitted, provided the refrains encourage congregational participation.”<sup>116</sup> While through-composed settings of the *Gloria* give clearest expression to the text, the addition of refrains is permitted, provided the refrains encourage congregational participation.

150. The *Gloria* may not be moved to a different part of the Mass than the one assigned by the *Roman Missal*. It may not, for example, be used in place of the Entrance chant or song, or during the sprinkling with blessed water.

#### The Collect

151. The priest then invites all to pray and, after a brief silence, sings or says the Collect.<sup>117</sup> Even when the Collect is not sung, the conclusion to the prayer may be sung, along with the response by the people.

#### *The Liturgy of the Word*

152. The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings and responses from Sacred Scripture.<sup>118</sup> In receiving the Word of God with their hearts and minds, and in responding to it in song, “the people make God’s Word their own.”<sup>119</sup>

#### The Readings from Sacred Scripture

153. While the readings are ordinarily read in a clear, audible, and intelligent way,<sup>120</sup> they may also be sung. “This singing, however, must serve to bring out the sense of the words, not obscure them.”<sup>121</sup>

154. Even if the readings are not sung, the concluding acclamation *The Word of the Lord* may be sung, even by someone other than the reader; all respond with the acclamation *Thanks be to God*. “In this way the assembled congregation pays reverence to the word of God it has listened to in faith and gratitude.”<sup>122</sup>

#### The Responsorial Psalm

155. The Responsorial Psalm follows the first reading. Because it is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word, and is in effect a reading from Scripture, it has great liturgical and pastoral significance.<sup>123</sup> Corresponding to the reading that it follows, the Responsorial Psalm is intended to foster meditation on

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<sup>115</sup> GIRM, no. 53.

<sup>116</sup> BCL, *Policy for the Approval of Sung Settings of Liturgical Texts*.

<sup>117</sup> See GIRM, no. 54.

<sup>118</sup> GIRM, no. 55.

<sup>119</sup> GIRM, no. 55.

<sup>120</sup> See LFM, no. 14.

<sup>121</sup> “On occasions when the readings are in Latin, the manner of singing given in the *Ordo cantus Missae* is to be maintained” (LFM, no. 14).

<sup>122</sup> LFM, no. 18.

<sup>123</sup> LFM, no. 19-22; see GIRM, no. 61.

the Word of God. Its musical setting should aid in this, being careful to not overshadow the other readings.<sup>124</sup>

156. “As a rule the Responsorial Psalm should be sung.”<sup>125</sup> Preferably, the Psalm is sung responsorially: “the psalmist, or cantor of the psalm, sings the psalm verses and the whole congregation joins in by singing the response.”<sup>126</sup> If this is not possible, the Psalm is sung completely without an intervening response by the community.

157. The proper or seasonal Responsorial Psalm from the *Lectionary for Mass*, with the congregation singing the response, is to be preferred to the gradual from the *Graduale Romanum*.<sup>127</sup> When the Latin gradual is sung *in directum* (straight through) by choir alone, the congregation should be given a vernacular translation.

158. Because the Psalm is properly a form of sung prayer, “every means available in each individual culture is to be employed”<sup>128</sup> in fostering the singing of the Psalm at Mass, including the extraordinary options provided by the *Lectionary for Mass*. In addition to the proper or seasonal Psalm in the *Lectionary*, the Responsorial Psalm may also be taken from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex*, or it may be an antiphon and psalm from another collection of the psalms and antiphons, including psalms arranged in paraphrase or in metrical form, providing that they have been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the diocesan bishop.

159. Songs or hymns that do not at least paraphrase a psalm may never be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.<sup>129</sup>

160. If it is not possible for the Psalm to be sung, the response alone may be sung, while the lector reads the intervening verses of the Psalm “in a manner conducive to meditation on the word of God.”<sup>130</sup>

#### The Gospel Acclamation

161. In the Gospel Acclamation, the assembled faithful welcome “the Lord who is about to speak to them.”<sup>131</sup> The cantor may intone the Acclamation, which is repeated by the whole assembly. After the cantor or choir sings the verse, the entire assembly again sings the Acclamation. If there is a Gospel procession, the Acclamation may be repeated as often as necessary to accompany the Gospel procession. The verses are as a rule taken from the *Lectionary for Mass*.

162. The Gregorian settings of the Gospel Acclamation are most appropriate for use in those communities which are able to sing the response communally.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> See LFM, no. 19.

<sup>125</sup> LFM, no. 20.

<sup>126</sup> LFM, no. 20.

<sup>127</sup> “The Responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should, as a rule, be taken from the *Lectionary*” (GIRM, no. 61; see LFM, nos. 20, 89).

<sup>128</sup> LFM, no. 21.

<sup>129</sup> See GIRM, no. 61.

<sup>130</sup> LFM, no. 22; see LFM, no. 21.

<sup>131</sup> LFM, no. 23.

<sup>132</sup> GIRM, no. 62, “[The Gospel Acclamation] is sung by all while standing.”

163. During most of the church year, the *Alleluia* with the proper verse serves as the Gospel Acclamation. During the season of Lent, alternate acclamations with their proper verse are used, as found in the *Lectionary for Mass*, or the Psalm alone may be used. The Gospel Acclamation may be omitted when it is not sung.

164. When there is only one reading before the Gospel, the Gospel Acclamation may be omitted; if it is a season in which the *Alleluia* is said, the *Alleluia* may be used as the response of the Psalm, or the Psalm with its proper response may be used followed by the *Alleluia* with its verse. The Gospel Acclamation may be omitted when it is not sung.<sup>133</sup>

#### The Sequence

165. The Sequence is a liturgical hymn that is sung before the Gospel Acclamation on certain days. On Easter Sunday (*Victimae paschali laudes*) and Pentecost Day (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*), the Sequence is required.<sup>134</sup> On the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord (*Lauda Sion Salvatorem*) and Our Lady of Sorrows (*Stabat Mater*), the Sequence is optional.

166. The Sequence may be sung by all together, or in alternation between the congregation and choir and cantor, or by the choir or cantor alone. The text from the *Lectionary for Mass* may be used, or a metrical paraphrase may be sung, provided that it is found in an approved collection of liturgical songs.

#### The Gospel

167. "Of all the rites connected with the Liturgy of the Word, the reverence due to the Gospel reading must receive special attention."<sup>135</sup>

168. While the Gospel is ordinarily proclaimed in a clear, audible, and intelligent way,<sup>136</sup> it may also be sung.<sup>137</sup> "This singing, however, must serve to bring out the sense of the words, not obscure them."<sup>138</sup>

169. "Even if the Gospel itself is not sung, it is appropriate for the greeting *The Lord be with you*, and *A reading from the holy Gospel according to . . .*, and at the end *The Gospel of the Lord* to be sung, in order that the congregation may also sing its acclamations. This is a way both of bringing out the importance of the Gospel reading and of stirring up the faith of those who hear it."<sup>139</sup>

#### The Creed

170. The Creed is said by the entire assembly. Because it is an expression of faith by "the whole gathered people,"<sup>140</sup> the participation of all present should be carefully safeguarded, whether it is said or sung. "If it is sung, it is begun by the Priest or, if this is appropriate, by a cantor or by the choir. It is

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<sup>133</sup> GIRM, no. 63.

<sup>134</sup> GIRM, no. 64.

<sup>135</sup> LFM, no. 17.

<sup>136</sup> LFM, no. 14.

<sup>137</sup> On occasions when the Gospel is in Latin, the manner of singing given in the *Ordo cantus Missae* is to be maintained. (See LFM, no. 14.)

<sup>138</sup> LFM, no. 14.

<sup>139</sup> LFM, no. 17.

<sup>140</sup> GIRM, no. 67.

sung, however, either by all together or by the people alternating with the choir.”<sup>141</sup> The use of a congregational refrain may be helpful in this regard.

#### The Prayer of the Faithful

171. The Prayer of the Faithful consists of intercessions by which “the people respond in a certain way to the word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer prayers to God for the salvation of all.”<sup>142</sup> Because it has the structure of a litany, and provided that it can be understood when sung, it is appropriate to sing the Prayer of the Faithful, or just the invitation and response, or even the response only.

#### *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

172. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is made up of three main parts: the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the Communion Rite.<sup>143</sup>

##### The Preparation of the Gifts: Offertory Procession

173. After the altar has been prepared, gifts of bread and wine are brought to the priest or deacon by members of the liturgical assembly. This procession is accompanied by an Offertory chant or song,<sup>144</sup> “which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar.”<sup>145</sup> The norms on the manner of singing are the same as for the Entrance chant (see nos. 142ff. in this document).

174. Even when there is no procession with the gifts, singing may still accompany the rites at the Offertory.<sup>146</sup> Instrumental music is also appropriate.

175. The priest then prays the Prayer over the Offerings. Even when the prayer is not sung, the conclusion to the prayer may be sung, along with the response by the people.

##### The Eucharistic Prayer

176. The Eucharistic Prayer is the center and summit of the entire celebration. Joining the people with himself, the priest prays the Eucharistic Prayer in the name of the entire assembly “to God the Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>147</sup> Through the Eucharistic Prayer “the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of sacrifice. The Eucharistic Prayer demands that all listen to it with reverence and in silence,”<sup>148</sup> giving voice to their interior participation by joining in the Eucharistic acclamations.

177. The Eucharistic Prayer is a single liturgical act, consisting of several parts: an introductory dialogue, the thanksgiving or preface, the *Sanctus*, the calling down of the Holy Spirit (*epiclesis*), the institution narrative, the Memorial Acclamation, the anamnesis, the intercessions, and the doxology with its Amen.

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<sup>141</sup> GIRM, no. 68.

<sup>142</sup> GIRM, no. 69. See LFM, nos. 31 and 53.

<sup>143</sup> See GIRM, no. 72.

<sup>144</sup> See GIRM, nos. 37b, 111.

<sup>145</sup> GIRM, no. 74.

<sup>146</sup> See GIRM, no. 74.

<sup>147</sup> See GIRM, no. 78.

<sup>148</sup> GIRM, no. 78.

178. In order to make clear the ritual unity of the Eucharistic Prayer, it is recommended that there be a stylistic unity to the musical elements of the prayer, especially the *Sanctus*, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen. As much as possible, elements such as the preface dialogue and preface should be chanted at a pitch that best relates them to the key and modality of the other sung elements of the Eucharistic Prayer.

179. The Eucharistic Prayer begins with a dialogue between the priest and the people that expresses their communion with one another in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice. The faithful “give thanks to God and offer the spotless Victim not only through the hands of the Priest but also together with him.”<sup>149</sup> Because the preface dialogue is among the most important dialogues of the Mass, it is very appropriate that it be sung, especially on Sundays and other solemn occasions.<sup>150</sup>

180. The people take part in the Eucharistic Prayer by listening attentively to the words sung or spoken by the priest and joining their hearts and minds to the actions of the prayer. Their voices should be joined together in the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer, including the *Sanctus*, the great cosmic acclamation of praise; the Memorial Acclamation, by which the faithful participate in keeping the memory of Christ’s Paschal Mystery; and the Amen that follows the concluding doxology, by which they give assent to the entire prayer. These acclamations should be sung, especially on Sundays and solemnities.<sup>151</sup>

181. Because the Eucharistic Prayer is the central action of the entire celebration, priests should, if possible, sing at least those parts for which musical notation is provided in the *Roman Missal*, at least on Sundays and on more solemn occasions. These parts include the opening dialogue and the Preface, the invitation to the Memorial Acclamation, and the concluding doxology. It is not permitted to recite the Eucharistic Prayer inaudibly while the *Sanctus* is sung.

182. It is likewise appropriate for priests to sing the entire Eucharistic Prayer, especially on solemn occasions. The chant setting provided in the *Roman Missal* or another composition approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops may be used. “While the Priest proclaims the Eucharistic Prayer ‘there should be no other prayers or singing, and the organ or other musical instruments should be silent,’ except for the people’s acclamations.”<sup>152</sup>

183. “It is a praiseworthy practice for the parts that are to be said by all the concelebrants together and for which musical notation is provided in the Missal to be sung.”<sup>153</sup>

### *The Communion Rite*

184. The high point of the Communion Rite is the reception of Holy Communion. This is preceded by rites that prepare the faithful to receive the Lord’s Body and Blood as spiritual food.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> GIRM, no. 95.

<sup>150</sup> See GIRM, no. 40.

<sup>151</sup> See GIRM, no. 40.

<sup>152</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum (Instruction on the Eucharist)*, no. 53 (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2004).

<sup>153</sup> GIRM, no. 218.

<sup>154</sup> See GIRM, no. 80.

185. The Lord's Prayer and the Sign of Peace are followed by the Breaking of the Bread, "which gave the entire Eucharistic Action its name in apostolic times" and which "signifies that the many faithful are made one body (1 Cor 10:17) by receiving Communion from the one Bread of Life which is Christ, who died and rose for the salvation of the world."<sup>155</sup> This Fraction Rite, accompanied by the *Agnus Dei* chant, is followed by the *Ecce Agnus Dei* and the reception of Holy Communion. The Communion Rite concludes with the Prayer after Communion.

#### The Lord's Prayer

186. The rites of preparation for the reception of Holy Communion begin with the Lord's Prayer. When the Lord's Prayer is sung, the doxology should also be sung by all. If possible, the invitation and embolism should also be sung by the priest.

#### The Sign of Peace

187. The brief period of time needed for the exchange of the Sign of Peace must not be protracted by the singing of a song.

#### The Fraction Rite and the Agnus Dei

188. The supplicatory chant *Agnus Dei* accompanies the Fraction Rite. It is, "as a rule, sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation responding; or it is, at least, recited aloud. This invocation accompanies the fraction and, for this reason, may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has reached its conclusion, the last time ending with the words *dona nobis pacem* (*grant us peace*)."<sup>156</sup> When the *Agnus Dei* is sung repeatedly as a litany, Christological invocations with other texts may be used. In this case, the first and final invocations are always *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God).

#### The Communion Chant or Song

189. "While the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the Communion chant [or song] is begun. Its purpose is to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive Communion."<sup>157</sup> The singing begins immediately and continues "for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful."<sup>158</sup> The Communion chant or song may be sung by the people with choir or cantor, or by the choir alone. Because the Communion chant expresses the unity of those processing and receiving the Holy Sacrament, communal singing is commendable. The singing of the people should be preeminent.

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<sup>155</sup> GIRM, no. 83.

<sup>156</sup> GIRM, no. 83.

<sup>157</sup> GIRM, no. 86.

<sup>158</sup> GIRM, no. 86.

190. There are several options for the Communion song or chant,<sup>159</sup> including the proper antiphon from the *Graduale Romanum*, a seasonal antiphon from the *Graduale Simplex*,<sup>160</sup> an antiphon and psalm from a collection approved for liturgical use, or another appropriate liturgical song.<sup>161</sup>

191. In selecting a Communion song suitable for the Eucharistic banquet in which God's blessings are bestowed so abundantly, one should look for texts that have themes of joy, wonder, unity, gratitude, and praise. Following ancient Roman liturgical tradition, the Communion song might reflect themes of the Gospel reading of the day. It is also appropriate to select a Communion processional song that reflects the liturgical action, i.e., eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ.

192. As a processional piece, the Communion chant or song presents particular challenges. The faithful are encouraged to grasp ever more deeply the essentially communitarian nature of the Communion procession. In order to foster participation of the faithful with "unity of voices," it is recommended that psalms sung in the responsorial style, or songs with easily memorized refrains, be used. The refrains will generally need to be limited in number and repeated often, especially at the outset, so that they become familiar to the faithful.

193. When the Communion procession is lengthy, more than one piece of music might be desirable. In this case, there may be a combination of pieces for congregation and pieces for choir alone. Choirs with the requisite ability may sing the proper Communion chant from the *Graduale Romanum*, either in Gregorian chant or in a polyphonic setting, or other suitable choral pieces. Instrumental music may also be used to foster a spirit of unity and joy. If there is a hymn or song after Communion, the Communion music should be ended "in a timely manner."<sup>162</sup> A period of silent reflection for the entire congregation after the reception of Communion is also appropriate.

194. During the various seasons of the year, the psalm or song during Communion should be chosen with the spirit of that season in mind. On most Sundays and other days, it would be appropriate to sing one of the psalms that have long been associated with participation in the Eucharistic banquet, such as Psalms 23, 34, and 147. There is also a substantial repertory of liturgical songs that give expression to the joy and wonder of sharing in the Lord's Supper.

195. Care should be taken to ensure that the musicians (singers and instrumentalists), too, "can receive Communion with ease."<sup>163</sup> Since the Communion song begins while the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the singers and other musicians may receive Communion at or near the end of the procession.

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<sup>159</sup> "In the dioceses of the United States of America there are four options for the Communion chant (song): (1) the antiphon from the Roman Missal or the Psalm from the *Roman Gradual*, as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the *Simple Gradual*; (3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the diocesan Bishop, including psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) a suitable liturgical song chosen in accordance with no. 86. This is sung either by the choir alone or by the choir or cantor with the people" (GIRM, no. 87).

<sup>160</sup> Antiphons from the *Graduale Romanum* or *Graduale Simplex* might be sung in Latin or vernacular.

<sup>161</sup> See GIRM, no. 87.

<sup>162</sup> GIRM, no. 86.

<sup>163</sup> GIRM, no. 86.

### Song After Communion

196. "When the distribution of Communion is finished, as circumstances suggest, the priest and faithful spend some time praying privately. If desired, a psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may also be sung by the entire congregation."<sup>164</sup> The song after Communion should focus the assembly on the mystery of the Holy Communion in which it participates, and it should never draw undue attention to the choir or other musicians. The congregation may stand for the song after Communion if the nature of the music seems to call for it.

197. The priest may sing the Prayer after Communion, or even just the concluding formula. At the conclusion of the prayer, the entire assembly sings the Amen as a sign of assent.

### *The Concluding Rites*

198. Especially on Sundays and other solemn occasions, the blessing may be sung by the priest with the assembly singing the Amen, and the dismissal may be sung by the deacon or priest with the assembly singing *Thanks be to God*.

199. Although it is not necessary to sing a recessional hymn,<sup>165</sup> when it is a custom, all may join in a hymn or song after the dismissal. When a closing song is used, the procession of ministers should be arranged in such a way that it finishes during the final stanza. At times, e.g., if there has been a song after Communion, it may be appropriate to choose an option other than congregational song for the recessional. Other options include a choral or instrumental piece or, particularly during Lent, silence.

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<sup>164</sup> GIRM, no. 88.

<sup>165</sup> GIRM, no. 90.

# Rejoice in the Lord Always (2013)

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*Though the USCCB's Sing to the Lord is an important and weighty contribution to the interpretation of the Roman documents, it is not the only possible approach. This letter from Bishop Alexander K. Sample, then of the Diocese of Marquette, MI, shows another approach to interpreting the same documents.*

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## Introduction

In any discussion of the *ars celebrandi* (the “art of celebrating”) as it relates to the Holy Mass, perhaps nothing is more important or has a greater impact than the place of sacred music. The beauty, dignity and prayerfulness of the Mass depend to a large extent on the music that accompanies the liturgical action. The Holy Mass must be truly beautiful, the very best we can offer to God, reflecting his own perfect beauty and goodness.

Because the place of sacred music is so important, I am issuing this pastoral letter on the nature, purpose and quality of sacred music. This is an important discussion to have, since so often the music selected for Mass is reduced to a matter of subjective “taste,” i.e. what style of music appeals to this or that person or group, as if there were no objective principles to be followed. There are indeed objective principles worthy of study and proper implementation, as will be shown.

At the outset, it must be acknowledged that Church musicians have labored long and hard in the wake of the Second Vatican Council to help accomplish the Council’s goals as it concerns the renewal of the Sacred Liturgy, especially the Mass. Indeed, many have made it their life’s work to provide music for the Sacred Liturgy. The Church, including both clergy and laity, is grateful beyond words for their dedication and service. It must also be said that the principles and practical applications which follow will come as a real change in focus and direction for many of these same dedicated musicians. What is attempted here is a faithful presentation of what the Church has taught as it regards sacred music from the time before the Council, at the Council itself, and in the implementation of the Council’s thought in subsequent years. Although much of what follows may contravene the formation that many have experienced over recent years, this is in no way to be interpreted as a criticism of those dedicated Church musicians who have offered their service with a generous heart and with good will.

Change can be difficult, but this can also be an exciting time of rediscovering the spirit of the Liturgy and exploring new horizons of sacred music. Through education and formation, the Diocese will attempt to provide all the support, encouragement and assistance it can to musicians in implementing the Church’s vision and norms for sacred music.

### 1. Some history and the nature and purpose of Sacred Music

Questions concerning the place of music in divine worship can be traced back to the earliest days of the Church. At around the time of the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.) and the legalization of Christianity, the question of the inclusion of music in sacred worship was raised and much debated. Did it have a place at all in the Church’s worship? Since the psalms, part of Sacred Scripture, were meant to be sung, music was seen, ultimately, to be part of the very integrity of the Word of God. Furthermore, since Christian

worship was moored to the Sacred Scriptures, music was seen as necessarily worthy of being preserved and fostered in the public worship of the Church.

Therefore, in the tradition of all the apostolic Churches, sacred music has been considered integral to the Sacred Liturgy. This means that the music proper to the Mass is not merely an addendum to worship, i.e. something external added on to the form and structure of the Mass. Rather, sacred music is an essential element of worship itself. It is an art form which takes its life and purpose from the Sacred Liturgy and is part of its very structure.

The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn Liturgy.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)

This understanding would preclude the common notion that we take the Mass and simply “tack on” four songs (the opening hymn, offertory hymn, communion hymn and recessional hymn), along with the sung ordinary of the Mass (Gloria, Sanctus, etc...). We must come to see that, since sacred music is integral to the Mass, the role of sacred music is to help us sing and pray the texts of the Mass itself, not just ornament it.

With this understanding of the essential nature of sacred music, what might be said of its purpose?

Sacred music, being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy, participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.<sup>2</sup>

The following statement from the Second Vatican Council in 1962 is drawn from the *moto proprio*, *Tra le sollecitudini* of Pope St. Pius X in the year 1903, just quoted above:

Accordingly, the Sacred Council, keeping to the norms and precepts of ecclesiastical tradition and discipline, and having regard to the purpose of sacred music, which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful, decrees as follows...<sup>3</sup> (emphasis added)

The Church solemnly teaches us, then, that the very purpose of sacred music is twofold: the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful. This understanding of the essential nature and purpose of sacred music must direct and inform everything else that is said about it. This essential nature and purpose will also have important and serious implications regarding its proper place within our divine worship.

## 2. The qualities of Sacred Music

With a proper understanding of the nature and purpose of sacred music and its relationship to the Holy Mass, it is necessary to next discuss the essential *qualities* of sacred music. These qualities are not

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<sup>1</sup> Vatican Council II: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) 112

<sup>2</sup> Pius X: *Tra le sollecitudini* I:1

<sup>3</sup> SC 112

arbitrary or subjective. Rather they objectively flow from the essential nature and purpose of sacred music itself.

Church teaching emphasizes that the music proper to the Sacred Liturgy possesses three qualities: sanctity, beauty, and universality. Only music which possesses all three of these qualities is worthy of the Mass.

Sacred music should consequently possess, in the highest degree, the qualities proper to the liturgy, and in particular sanctity and goodness of form, which will spontaneously produce the final quality of universality.<sup>4</sup>

#### *a. The sanctity of sacred music*

Turning once again to the teaching of Pope St. Pius X, which has had a significant impact on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in this regard, we read:

[Sacred music] must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.<sup>5</sup>

Vatican II emphasized the sanctity of sacred music in these terms:

(S)acred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.<sup>6</sup>

#### *b. The intrinsic beauty (artistic goodness) of sacred music*

Since everything associated with the Mass must be beautiful, reflecting the infinite beauty and goodness of the God we worship, this applies in a special way to the music which forms an essential and integral part of our divine worship. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI:

Certainly, the beauty of our celebrations can never be sufficiently cultivated, fostered and refined, for nothing can be too beautiful for God, Who is Himself infinite Beauty. Yet our earthly liturgies will never be more than a pale reflection of the liturgy celebrated in the Jerusalem on high, the goal of our pilgrimage on earth. May our own celebrations nonetheless resemble that liturgy as closely as possible and grant us a foretaste of it!<sup>7</sup>

Pope St. Pius X spoke of the artistic value of sacred music, another way of considering its intrinsic beauty:

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<sup>4</sup> Pius X, Op. cit. I:2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. I:2

<sup>6</sup> SC 112

<sup>7</sup> Pope Benedict to priests at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, September 13, 2008

[Sacred music] must be true art, for otherwise it will be impossible for it to exercise on the minds of those who listen to it that efficacy which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her liturgy the art of musical sounds.<sup>8</sup>

#### *c. The universality of sacred music*

Finally, the third essential quality of sacred music must be considered, i.e. its universality. This quality means that any composition of sacred music, even one which reflects the unique culture of a particular region, would still be easily recognized as having a sacred character. The quality of holiness, in other words, is a universal principle that transcends culture.

While every nation is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinate in such a manner to the general character of sacred music, that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them.<sup>9</sup>

This articulation of the essential qualities of sacred music is necessary because there is often a lack of understanding or confusion as to what music is proper to the Mass and worthy of its inclusion in divine worship. Not every form or style of music is capable of being rendered suitable for the Mass.

One often gets the impression that, as long as the written text of the music or song speaks about God, then it qualifies as “sacred music.” Given what has been articulated here, this is clearly not the case. As an example, the *Gloria* of the Mass set to a Polka beat or in the style of rock music is not sacred music. Why not? Because such styles of music, as delightful as they might be for the dance hall or a concert, do not possess all three of the intrinsic qualities of sanctity, artistic goodness (beauty) and universality proper to sacred music.

### 3. The Treasury of Sacred Music in the Church

The treasury of sacred music in the Church is indeed vast and spans many centuries, from the earliest development of chant down to our own day. But it must be born in mind that any music which forms part of this treasury, whether ancient or modern, must possess the essential qualities mentioned above and must have the true nature and purpose of sacred music as understood by the Church.

An examination of the different forms of sacred music held as a treasure by the Church is in order at this point.

#### *a. Gregorian chant*

Any discussion of the different forms of sacred music must start with Gregorian chant. The Second Vatican Council, taking a lead from Pope St. Pius X, articulated that Gregorian chant should enjoy a *pride of place* in the Roman liturgy. Every official liturgical document and every teaching of the popes since then has reiterated this important principle. Here again are the words of Pope St. Pius X:

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<sup>8</sup> Pius X: Op. cit. I:2

<sup>9</sup> Pius X: Op. cit. I:2

Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule: the more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple.<sup>10</sup>

As regards the faithful's participation in sacred chant, Pope Pius XI had the following to say:

In order that the faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian Chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it.<sup>11</sup>

These themes of Pope St. Pius X and Pope Pius XI were actively taken up by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council:

(S)teps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.<sup>12</sup>

The Church acknowledges Gregorian Chant as specially suited to the Roman Liturgy. Therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.<sup>13</sup>

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, in setting out the norms for the celebration of Mass reiterates this last point of the Council:

The main place should be given, all things being equal, to Gregorian chant, as being proper to the Roman Liturgy.<sup>14</sup>

One of the great Popes of our time, Blessed John Paul II, made the teaching of Pope St. Pius X his own:

With regard to compositions of liturgical music, I make my own the "general rule" that St Pius X formulated in these words: "The more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savour the Gregorian melodic form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple". It is not, of course, a question of imitating Gregorian chant but rather of ensuring that new compositions are imbued with the same spirit that inspired and little by little came to shape it.<sup>15</sup>

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, has made known his own teaching on the importance of Gregorian chant to the sacred liturgy:

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. II:3

<sup>11</sup> Pius XI: *Divini cultus*, 1928

<sup>12</sup> SC 54

<sup>13</sup> SC 116

<sup>14</sup> GIRM 41

<sup>15</sup> Blessed John Paul II: Chirograph for the Centenary of *Tra le sollecitudini*, 12

(W)hile respecting various styles and different and highly praiseworthy traditions, I desire, in accordance with the request advanced by the Synod Fathers, that Gregorian chant be suitably esteemed and employed as the chant proper to the Roman liturgy.<sup>16</sup>

The U.S. Bishops' document on sacred music, *Sing to the Lord*, also reminded the Church in the United States of the importance and pride of place enjoyed by Gregorian chant. Some practical suggestions are given in that document for the implementation of this principle.<sup>17</sup>

Given all of this strong teaching from the Popes, the Second Vatican Council, and the U.S. Bishops, how is it that this ideal concerning Gregorian chant has not been realized in the Church? Far from enjoying a "pride of place" in the Church's sacred liturgy, one rarely if ever hears Gregorian chant.

This is a situation which must be rectified. It will require great effort and serious catechesis for the clergy and faithful, but Gregorian chant must be introduced more widely as a normal part of the Mass. Some practical steps toward this are outlined in the Directive section of this pastoral letter.

### *b. Other Sacred Music of the Church*

As regards the sacred music which is appropriate for liturgical worship, next in importance to Gregorian chant is the vast repertoire of sacred polyphony, old and new, Eastern and Western. In the words of Vatican II:

(O)ther kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action.<sup>18</sup> (emphasis added)

The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. Choirs must be diligently promoted.<sup>19</sup>

(Sacred polyphony is composed in a particular musical form and is most often associated with the Renaissance and composers such as Palestrina, Victoria, Tallis, Allegri and the like.)

Also a part of the Church's musical treasury is the vast body of popular sacred music. In the context of the sacred liturgy, the term "popular" does not signify the so-called "pop culture" but comes from the Latin *populus*, people. Popular sacred music includes hymnody, psalmody, vernacular Mass settings, many of the Latin chant Mass settings, and other forms of sacred music suited to the musical abilities of the people.

Religious singing by the people is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises, as also during liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may ring out according to the norms and requirements of the rubrics.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Benedict XVI: *Sacramentum caritatis*, 2007, n.42

<sup>17</sup> USCCB, *Sing to the Lord* (2007), 72-80

<sup>18</sup> SC 116, GIRM 41

<sup>19</sup> SC 114

<sup>20</sup> SC 118

The musical treasury of the Church includes not only sacred music indebted to European musical culture but also the sacred music native to other nations and peoples, which has organically developed in the context of the Latin Rite. In a community with vital social and historical ties to a specific culture, it can be most fitting that the sacred music tradition of that culture be a part of its worship when, under the guidance of the Church, it can be organically integrated into the context of Catholic worship.

In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius.<sup>21</sup>

It is important to note here that when we speak of the sacred music of a particular culture, we are indeed speaking of music that is considered truly “sacred” within a culture. This principle is not applicable to subcultures within a given society that have no connection with a religious or spiritual culture.

### *c. Secular Music*

The Church recognizes an objective difference between sacred music and secular music. Despite the Church’s norms, the idea persists among some that the lyrics alone determine whether a song is sacred or secular, while the music is exempt from any liturgical criteria and may be of any style. This erroneous idea, which was alluded to earlier, is not supported by the Church’s norms either before or since the Second Vatican Council.

This does not mean that more modern compositions are not to be admitted into the Mass. However, such compositions must meet the essential and objective criteria for what constitutes sacred music. Following are some useful citations illustrating this point. First, from before the Second Vatican Council:

It cannot be said that modern music and singing should be entirely excluded from Catholic worship. For, if they are not profane nor unbecoming to the sacredness of the place and function, and do not spring from a desire of achieving extraordinary and unusual effects, then our churches must admit them since they can contribute in no small way to the splendor of the sacred ceremonies, can lift the mind to higher things and foster true devotion of soul.<sup>22</sup>

An exhortation from the Council itself:

Let (composers) produce compositions which have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music.<sup>23</sup>

From Blessed John Paul II:

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<sup>21</sup> SC 119

<sup>22</sup> Pius XII: *Mediator Dei* 193, 1947

<sup>23</sup> SC 121

Today, the meaning of the category ‘sacred music’ has been broadened to include repertoires that cannot be part of the celebration without violating the spirit and norms of the Liturgy itself. Not all the expressions of music are able to express adequately the mystery grasped in the fullness of the Church’s faith. Consequently, not all forms of music can be considered suitable for liturgical celebrations.<sup>24</sup>

From our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI:

As far as the liturgy is concerned, we cannot say that one song is as good as another. Generic improvisation or the introduction of musical genres which fail to respect the meaning of the liturgy should be avoided. As an element of the liturgy, song should be well integrated into the overall celebration. Consequently everything—texts, music, execution—ought to correspond to the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, the structure of the rite and the liturgical seasons.<sup>25</sup>

These reflections on the nature, purpose, qualities and treasury of sacred music in the Church’s liturgy present serious challenges in our own day as we seek to renew the Mass in a way that respects, fosters and promotes the true nature of the Mass itself. It will not be easy and will take time and patience. But it must be done if we are to achieve a genuine *ars celebrandi* in the Mass. The practical Directives regarding sacred music in this pastoral letter will help move us in the right direction.

## Liturgical Directives for the Diocese of Marquette

The following directives are intended to guide the development of a deeper understanding of the place of sacred music with the liturgy of the Mass and to implement the fundamental principles outlined in this pastoral letter. They are to be integrated into the life of the parishes, missions and schools of the Diocese of Marquette. They are also applicable to all weddings and funerals in the Diocese, even if celebrated outside of Mass. Although the implementation of these directives may take some time and catechesis, these directives are to be considered normative within the Diocese of Marquette under the authority of the diocesan Bishop, to whom is entrusted the responsibility to moderate, promote and guard the entire liturgical life of the diocesan Church.<sup>26</sup>

### 1. General Standards

#### *a. Participatio actuosa (active participation)*

Those responsible for sacred music in the Mass must foster and enable the *participatio actuosa* (active participation) of all the faithful; all should have the opportunity to participate fully and consciously in the sacred action of the Mass. This does not mean that everyone present has to sing everything all the time; the sacred music of the Mass pertains to different participants in different ways depending on its structure and its position in the rite. The congregation should be encouraged and enabled to sing whenever appropriate, and when the singing is properly rendered by the cantor or choir alone,

<sup>24</sup> Blessed John Paul II: Chirograph on Sacred Music, 2003

<sup>25</sup> Pope Benedict XVI: *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 2007

<sup>26</sup> *Code of Canon Law* (1983), c. 835 §1 and c. 838 §4.

participate interiorly through engaged and prayerful silent reflection. Likewise, the musicians should be attentive and prayerfully engaged in the parts of the Mass which do not necessarily involve music, both for their own spiritual good and so as not to become a distraction to others. They should participate in the Mass, observing all of the appropriate postures and gestures of the congregation to the fullest degree possible.

*b. Formation and compensation*

Pastors should see that musicians and those who direct them have opportunities for continuing education and authentic liturgical formation through agencies and events approved by the Bishop. In accord with the Church's teaching on

economic justice, pastors are to ensure that those who direct sacred music in the parish receive just compensation for their time and skills, commensurate with their experience and level of training.

*c. Practice and liturgical discipline*

As Pope Benedict XVI has stated, "*Nothing can be too beautiful for God*". Musicians should take these words to heart, because it is they who bear much of the responsibility for bringing beauty to our liturgical celebrations. Pastors should encourage musicians to aspire to the highest levels of beauty in sacred music and to embrace with joy the work which this entails. We should always aim high to offer God the best and the most beautiful music of which we are capable.

Whether paid or volunteer, those responsible for sacred music in the Mass every week should be committed to prior practice and rehearsal. Every hour of worship should represent at least two hours of structured preparation at a time and place apart from the congregation.

*d. Knowledge of the documents*

Every pastor and music director has a serious responsibility to read and become familiar with the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the Second Vatican Council and the Church's teaching documents on the liturgy and sacred music. Musical decisions in the Mass should always be informed by knowledge of the principles and norms contained in these documents. These documents are listed in the Appendix and are easily accessible on the Internet.

*e. Preparation not planning*

It is important to keep in mind that we do not *plan* the Mass; the Church has already provided us with a plan. We *prepare* to celebrate the Mass. This is a subtle yet important distinction. The plan is found in the liturgical calendar and the official liturgical books: the *Ordo*, the *Missal*, the *Lectionary* and the *Graduale*. Our celebrations should carry out the Church's plan as far as we are able, according to the resources and talents of the community, formed by knowledge of the norms and the Catholic worship tradition.

*f. What should we sing at Mass?*

1] The liturgical books (the *Missal*, *Graduale* and *Lectionary*) envision that, as a rule, we *sing the Mass at Mass*, rather than *sing songs during Mass*. To truly sing the Mass as described below is the ideal and should be an overall priority for parish worship.

2] The sung parts of the Mass consist of the Ordinary, the Propers, the Orations and the Dialogues:

The **Ordinary** consists of the Mass parts which are the same every Sunday: *Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei*. At times it is also appropriate to sing the *Credo*. Ordinarily these pertain to the congregation, although on occasion a skilled choir is permitted to sing a more challenging setting alone. They may be sung in Latin or the vernacular, in Gregorian settings or in other forms of sacred music.

The **Propers** are the parts which vary according to the calendar: *Entrance Chant, Responsorial Psalm, Alleluia with its verse, Offertory Chant and Communion Chant*.

*Entrance Chant, Offertory Chant and Communion Chant*

As the name implies, these are the chants sung at the Entrance, preparation of the Gifts and Communion respectively. These are found in the *Graduale Romanum*, the Missal and the *Graduale Simplex*, and are intended to be sung in Latin or the vernacular. Using the texts and musical settings for these chants is the first and preferred option.<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that many of the texts for these chants as they are found in the Roman Missal are new, and musical settings for them, in Latin and English, are currently being composed by Church musicians.

*Responsorial Psalm and the Alleluia with its verse*

These are the chants between the readings. The Responsorial Psalm with its response is normally taken from the Lectionary as assigned for that day. A “seasonal” Psalm with its response selected from the Lectionary may also be sung. A selection from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Graduale Simplex* may also be used.<sup>28</sup> The *Alleluia* verse is normally taken from the Lectionary itself or the *Graduale*. During Lent, the *Alleluia* is replaced by the Verse before the Gospel.<sup>29</sup>

The **Orations and Dialogues** are the texts of the Collects and other prayers, and those in which the celebrant and people address each other, for example the greeting and its response: “*The Lord be with you*” - “*And with your spirit*”. Musical notations for these dialogues are provided in the Missal and should be used.

*g. What about hymns?*

1] Hymns are a musical form pertaining more properly to the Liturgy of the Hours, rather than the Mass. Hymn-singing at Mass originated in the custom of the people singing vernacular devotional hymns at Low Mass during the celebrant’s silent recitation of the Latin prayers. However, the current Missal as well as official liturgical documents envision a singing of the Mass as outlined above.

2] The Roman Missal assigns a few hymns to various Masses in the course of the liturgical calendar (for example, the Sequences for Easter and Pentecost, and the *Ubi caritas* and *Pange lingua* on Holy Thursday). However, the hymns and songs commonly sung at Mass every week at the Entrance, Preparation of the Gifts and Communion are not identified in the Missal. It is important to recognize that when we sing hymns at these moments during Mass, it is because we are omitting some of the Mass chants: the Propers as discussed above.

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<sup>27</sup> The General Instruction of the Roman Missal 48, 74 and 87.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 61

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 63

3] Singing hymns in place of the Proper chants is permissible for pastoral reasons. The liturgical norms put the highest priority on singing the rite itself. We may never substitute other texts for the Ordinary parts of the Mass as described above. However, if it is not possible or practical to sing the Proper parts, we are referred to a secondary option: substituting music from a source other than the Missal, such as hymns from a hymnal.<sup>30</sup> These cannot be just any songs; they should be “liturgical” - based on liturgical texts or at least in some other way closely tied in with the Mass or the season. They must also meet the requirements for what constitutes sacred music. Note that this substitution of hymns for the Propers applies only to the Entrance Chant, the Offertory Chant and the Communion Chant, and never to the Responsorial Psalm or the Gospel verse.

## 2. Specific Musical Standards for Parish Masses

### *a. Singing the Mass*

1] One parish celebration every Sunday should be a Sung Mass (*Missa cantata*), offered with consistency and with the greatest care and attention the community can give it. In the former traditional parlance, this may have been referred to as a High Mass. It could also be referred to as a Solemn Mass. A Sung Mass need not be elaborate - indeed, the principle of noble simplicity should guide it. Other Masses in the parish may include less singing and more recited parts, but the Sung Mass sets the pattern and the model for sacred music in the parish.

2] The current Missal sometimes makes reference to the “principal” Mass of a parish. This may be the appropriate choice for the celebration of the Sung Mass. Parishes whose only Mass of precept is on Saturday may make this a Sung Mass. Pastors who have the care of more than one parish may rotate the Sung Mass among them weekly or seasonally according to local circumstances.

3] The Church’s liturgy admits of the principle of “degrees” or “progression” of solemnity, according to the liturgical calendar and the capabilities of the ministers of the Mass and the congregation. Singing plays a significant role in the application of this principle. In other words, on more solemn occasions, more of the Mass would be sung by the ministers and congregation and more elaborate music might be used. Also, the specific capabilities of a congregation and the ministers of the Mass might dictate which parts are sung, and whether simpler forms of sacred music would best fit the situation. These principles are explained in the Instruction on Music in the Liturgy (*Musicam Sacram*) following the Second Vatican Council. Particularly helpful in this regard are the progressive degrees of singing that should be employed in the celebration of Mass which are described there.<sup>31</sup> A very practical example of what is being said here would be the expectation that a daily ferial Mass with a small congregation and no musicians would employ much less singing than the Mass at Midnight for Christmas with full choir and organist. Then there are gradations of solemnity and singing in between.

4] It must also be recognized that some parishes and missions simply do not have the same pool of trained and qualified musicians as others. This does not mean that they should not also benefit from a prayerful and sung celebration of the Mass. It might mean that simpler forms of sacred music such as simple sacred plainchant and hymnody would best fit the occasion and the local situation. In small churches and congregations, more instruments and cantors singing into a microphone and amplified

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 48, 74 and 87.

<sup>31</sup> *Musicam Sacram*, 28

throughout the church is not the solution. Simple and basic forms of sacred music, done well and sung by the congregation can create a more solemn and beautiful celebration of the Mass. It is worth repeating that a Sung Mass need not be elaborate and the principle of noble simplicity should guide it. In this way, the higher standards of sacred music called for in this pastoral letter need not mean that getting through Mass will be more difficult for the smaller parishes and missions of the Diocese.

#### *b. Orations and Dialogues*

For the Sung Mass, the celebrant should learn to sing, without instrumental accompaniment, the celebrant's chants for the orations and dialogues to the melodies given in the Roman Missal, with the responses sung by the faithful. There is the simple human reality that some priests are not gifted with the ability to sing, or at least to carry a melody. In these cases, it might be more desirable for the celebrant to chant *recto tono* (on the same note) the parts that belong to him.

#### *c. The Ordinary*

1] Every parish has been asked to learn and use the *Mass of the Resurrection* by Randall DeBruyn as one of its regular Ordinary settings. A setting common to all the parishes will ensure strong participation at diocesan liturgies. This particular setting was chosen because it combines an elevated musical quality with congregational "singability," can be sung with or without a choir or cantor, and makes no excessive demands on the organist, thus making it usable at any Mass in parishes large or small. The *Mass of the Resurrection* is a setting which will provide some musical continuity from parish to parish within the diocese, while parishes gain a greater comfort level with the English plainchant settings of the Ordinary, especially those found in the Roman Missal, which should be given pride of place. Other settings are at the discretion of the parish, subject to the liturgical norms of the Church as outlined in this pastoral letter. Clergy should set an example by singing with the faithful wherever in the Mass this is appropriate.

2] Every parish and mission in the Diocese should establish to the best of its ability at least a minimum Gregorian repertoire of the chanted Ordinary sung by the people in Latin.<sup>32</sup> Mass VIII (*De Angelis*) and Mass XVIII (*Deus Genitor alme*) are the most popular and accessible. Parishes capable of more than this are encouraged to build their chant repertoire beyond this minimum. (It is worth noting that the melody given in the Missal itself for the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei* in English and Latin are from Mass XVIII.)

3] Optimally at Mass the Ordinary should consist of one musically unified suite rather than mixing together parts of different settings.

#### *d. The Propers*

It is acknowledged that the singing of the Propers can present difficulties in parishes unaccustomed to singing the Mass as described above. However, there are parishes where the resources exist (or can be developed) to sing the Propers. The pastors and musicians of these parishes are encouraged and challenged to work toward a restoration of the sung Propers in some form at the Sung Mass, according to the options which are described in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Resources for the

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<sup>32</sup> SC 54; GIRM 41

sung Propers will be made available through catechesis that will be provided in the diocese to help implement this directive.

#### *e. Hymnody*

- 1] Because they substitute for the sacred texts of the Propers, hymns and songs must be genuinely sacred music. Texts must be theocentric - centered on God, not on ourselves or the congregation. It is desirable that a hymn reflect the Proper text whose position it occupies, or the Scripture readings of the day. At the very least it should have some reference to the season or the feast. Its length should also be taken into account considering the moment of the Mass it will occupy so that it does not require to be cut short to fit the ritual action or extend excessively beyond the same action.
- 2] It should be noted that the Missal makes no reference to a recessional hymn, making it an appropriate time for an instrumental (e.g. pipe organ) piece, or silence, especially during Lent.
- 3] Hymn and song texts must conform to the teachings and doctrines of the Church, especially with regard to the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Any which promote teachings contrary to the Faith are not to be used and must be retired from the parish repertoire. It must be sadly acknowledged that some hymns in approved hymnals, music issues and missalettes do not reflect Catholic theology and should not be used. Musicians should be attentive to this point and think carefully about the selection of hymns, seeking guidance from the pastors of the Church when needed.

#### *f. Respect for the given liturgical texts*

- 1] The texts of the Roman Missal and the Lectionary, and none others, constitute the official Mass in English. No one in the diocese, including the Bishop, has the authority to add to, subtract from or change the words of the Mass, either sung or recited. The only exceptions are when the Missal specifically gives an option, using expressions such as "in these or similar words." This is to be strictly interpreted and observed.
- 2] The English text of the Responsorial Psalm must be the translation provided in the Lectionary or in the revised Grail Psalter. These are the only English translations of the Psalms approved for the Liturgy of the Word. The Responsorial Psalm may not be replaced with another song or a paraphrase of a psalm. The norms given in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Introduction to the Lectionary* are to be followed in choosing the Psalm and its antiphon.<sup>33</sup>
- 3] The Gospel Acclamation is either "Alleluia" (without additional text added) or one of the Lenten acclamations found in the Lectionary. The Gospel verse is to be the proper text specified for the celebration.
- 4] Respect for the texts includes respect for the liturgical terminology of the Missal. "Gathering Rite," for example, is not a liturgical term; Mass begins with the Introductory Rites.

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<sup>33</sup> GIRM 61

#### *g. Musical instruments*

1] The Church accords the pipe organ pride of place as the musical instrument most in harmony with the spirit of the Roman liturgy.

In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument which adds a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things.<sup>34</sup>

A parish seeking to purchase or replace an organ must first consult with the diocesan staff responsible for the Sacred Liturgy. Usually a parish will be required to engage the services of a qualified organ consultant (not an organ company), to provide informed advice to the pastor and finance committee. If an electronic organ is purchased, it must be manufactured to the American Guild of Organists dimensional standards for its purchase to meet the approval of diocesan staff and the bishop.

2] Musical instruments other than the pipe organ must truly contribute to the sanctity and beauty of the Mass.

(Other instruments may be admitted) only on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.<sup>35</sup>

Blessed John Paul II expressed this principle in these words:

Care must be taken, however, to ensure that instruments are suitable for sacred use, that they are fitting for the dignity of the Church and can accompany the singing of the faithful and serve to edify them.<sup>36</sup>

2] During Lent the use of the organ and other instruments is allowed only as necessary to accompany singing. After the Gloria of Holy Thursday until the Gloria of the Easter Vigil, all music is exclusively vocal. If observance of this discipline presents grave difficulties, an instrument may be used, but only in a minimal way to support the voices.

3] Pre-recorded music may not substitute for actual musicians during the Mass. All music in the Mass is to be sung and played by musicians who are physically present as worshipers. If an organist or other instrumentalist suitable for the celebration of Mass is not available, it is certainly in accord with the spirit of the Roman Rite to sing the Mass in unaccompanied plainchant.

#### *h. Acoustics*

Interior renovation of churches should take into account the acoustical environment of the sacred liturgy. An environment designed to destroy all noise or reverberation will also make vibrant congregational participation very difficult to achieve. Communal singing requires hard surfaces and resonant spaces that reflect, amplify, blend, and distribute sound waves so that the singers may hear

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<sup>34</sup> SC 120

<sup>35</sup> SC 120

<sup>36</sup> Blessed John Paul II, Op. cit. 14

each other. Any difficulties that this may pose for the intelligibility of the spoken word can be addressed through modern sound technology.

#### *i. Copyright*

Music under copyright is not to be photocopied or otherwise reproduced without license or explicit permission of the copyright owner. Any copies of music on the parish premises which violate copyright law must be destroyed.

### 3. Associations of Church Musicians

Association among Church musicians in the Diocese of Marquette is encouraged as a means of fostering the true spirit of the sacred liturgy as it regards sacred music. As an example, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) has been active in the Diocese for many years. They, along with all Church musicians, are encouraged to continue their service and immerse themselves in a careful study of this pastoral letter and the principles outlined here. The formation of other Church musician associations is also encouraged, provided they are committed to an authentic implementation of the Church's directives on the sacred liturgy and sacred music.

### 4. Musical Standards for Diocesan Liturgies

A] The musical standards of the Church are to be put into the fullest practice at the Chrism Mass, Ordinations and other liturgies which the Bishop celebrates with the clergy and faithful of the Diocese, both in the cathedral church and elsewhere. Diocesan liturgies should be exemplary in their adherence to the Church's musical norms. In this way the bishop, priests and faithful of the Diocese may participate in the fullest liturgical model available in the diocese.

B] All priests capable of singing should learn to sing the Roman Canon, or at least the Consecration, to the melody in the Roman Missal. Thus they will be able to unite their voices in the Consecration at concelebrated Diocesan Masses.

## Conclusion

It is my sincere hope that this pastoral letter will be well received by the clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Marquette, for the sake of an authentic renewal of the Sacred Liturgy according to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the mind of the Church. I am especially counting on our wonderful and dedicated Church musicians to answer this call for renewal. May the renewal and reform of sacred music in the Diocese of Marquette lead us together to a beautiful and worthy celebration of the sacred mysteries of the Holy Mass, for the glory of God and the sanctification of all the faithful.

I entrust this great effort of renewal to the intercession of St. Cecilia, patroness of Church musicians, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary who sang the Lord's praises in her *Magnificat*. May we all together rejoice in the Lord always!

Given this day, January 21, 2013, the Memorial of St. Agnes, at the Chancery of the Diocese of Marquette.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Alexander K. Sample

Bishop of Marquette

## Appendix: Documents on Sacred Music in the Liturgy

Title	Year	Authority	Type
Tra le sollecitudini	1903	Pius X	<i>Motu proprio</i>
Divini Cultus	1928	Pius XI	<i>Encyclical</i>
Mediator Dei	1947	Pius XI	<i>Encyclical</i>
Musicae Sacrae	1955	Pius XII	<i>Instruction</i>
Sacrosanctum Concilium	1962	Vatican Council II	<i>Constitution</i>
Musicam Sacram	1967	S.C. of Rites	<i>Instruction</i>
General Instruction of the Roman Missal	2002		<i>Instruction</i>
On the Centenary of <i>Tra le sollecitudini</i>	2003	John Paul II	<i>Chirograph</i>
Sacramentum Caritatis	2007	Benedict XVI	<i>Apostolic Exhortation</i>
*Sing To The Lord	2007	USCCB	<i>Pastoral directive</i>

\*replaces *Music In Catholic Worship* (1970) and *Liturgical Music Today* (1982)

# Catholic Hymnody at the Service of the Church (2020)

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*This document from the USCCB begins the conversation around the doctrinal content of specific hymns. [Unfortunately, the publicly available copy contained many formatting errors that I left in, in the interest of changing the document as little as possible. -ed.]*

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## **Catholic Hymnody at the Service of the Church: An Aid for Evaluating Hymn Lyrics**

Committee on Doctrine  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
September 2020

### Preface

The beauty of Catholic hymnody is constitutively related to the truth of the mystery of faith it proposes for our wonder and praise. In the living Tradition of Catholicism, beauty and truth are convertible terms, and thus there can be no competition, much less contradiction, between the two. The truth of the faith need not be -- and indeed must not be -- compromised or subordinated to the canons of compositional style or the needs of musical or poetic form. At the same time, the beauty of the faith cannot be neglected -- indeed it must be reverenced and highlighted -- in the desire to communicate effectively the truth of what has been revealed. Catholic hymn-writers and composers necessarily inhabit a realm of creative interplay: they have the privilege and vocation of honoring and communicating the mystery of faith in word and music, and this requires genuine artistry, industry, and fidelity. While there are a number of factors that affect the suitability of hymns for use in Catholic liturgy, such as singability, beauty of language, poetry, etc., in this resource we are concerned with their doctrinal content.

The Church's Liturgy is the milieu in which the Word of God lives. The Sacred Scriptures, in particular, provide the normative idiom for the expression of the mystery. The Scriptures themselves, inspired and authoritative, are the fruit of the Church at prayer; the liturgical or doxological matrix intrinsic to the Church's life is the locus in which and from which the texts privileged as canonical arose. There is a necessary and direct relationship between the living Word of God and the Church's worship. Thus, the sacred texts, and the liturgical sources which draw on the living Word, provide something of a "norm" for expression when communicating the mystery of faith in liturgical poetics, or hymnody.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it this way, following the texts of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

The harmony of signs (song, music, words, and actions) is all the more expressive and fruitful when expressed in the cultural richness of the People of God who celebrate.

Hence "religious singing by the faithful is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises as well as in liturgical services," in conformity with the Church's norms, "the voices of the faithful may be heard." But "the texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine. Indeed they should be drawn chiefly from the Sacred Scripture and from liturgical sources." (no. 1158)

Christian tradition, both Eastern and Western, has from antiquity been acutely aware that hymns and other songs<sup>1</sup> are among the most significant forces in shaping - or misshaping - the religious and theological sensibility of the faithful.<sup>2</sup> It is all the more important, then, that hymnody selected for the liturgical life of the Church successfully draw out the beauty of the Christian mysteries themselves.<sup>3</sup> This cannot be done if language is used that is out of keeping with the sensibility created by scriptural texts and universal liturgical usage.

## Two General Guidelines

Based on the text quoted above, we can derive two general guidelines for determining whether a hymn is doctrinally suitable for liturgical use:

1. Is the hymn in conformity with Catholic doctrine?
2. Is the hymn expressed in image and vocabulary appropriately reflective of the usage of Scripture and the public liturgical prayer of the Church?

With regard to Guideline 1: An accurate assessment of conformity with Catholic doctrine requires a familiarity with Catholic doctrine itself, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the best resource available. Hymns do not have to be composed of doctrinal formulae (though hymns have used doctrinal formulas to good poetic effect, for example, the last verse of *Pange lingua*). It is important to avoid language that could be easily misconstrued in a way that is contrary to Catholic doctrine. The poet always has a certain "license" for language chosen to serve an aesthetic purpose. But in assessing whether a paraphrase or restatement is an appropriate use of poetic license or an inappropriate distortion, Guideline 2 can provide assistance.

These Guidelines can also be helpful in assessing a grouping of hymns and other songs, such as those commonly used in a given parish for the Communion Hymn (for example). Different hymns may

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<sup>1</sup> The guidelines offered in this document apply to lyrics composed for any music intended for use in the Sacred Liturgy or in public devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross.

<sup>2</sup> The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the liturgy as "the privileged place for catechizing the People of God" (no. 1074).

<sup>3</sup> The 23 July 2019 report by the Pew Research Center, "What Americans Know about Religion," presents a sobering account the extent of the lack of understanding of basic points of Catholic faith on the part of many American Catholics (<https://www.pewforum.org/2019/07/23/what-americans-know-about-religion/>). For example, the researchers found that only half of Catholics were able to answer correctly "a question about official church teachings on transubstantiation - that during Communion, the bread and wine actually *become* the body and blood of Christ. The other half of Catholics incorrectly say the church teaches that the bread and wine used in Communion are just symbols of the body and blood of Christ (45%) or say they are not sure (4%)" (p. 22).

legitimately express or reflect different aspects of one doctrine, but if all of the hymns relevant to a particular doctrine express only one dimension of the doctrine to the exclusion of others, then the catechesis offered by the hymnody would, as a whole, not be in conformity with Catholic doctrine. For example, a collection of hymns that emphasized the Eucharist as table fellowship to the exclusion of the vocabulary of sacrifice, altar, and priesthood, would not represent the fullness of Catholic teaching and therefore would catechize those singing such hymns every Sunday with a deficient sacramental theology.

## Examples of Application of the Guidelines

In 1997, Archbishop Daniel Buechlein, speaking for the newly-formed Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the *Catechism*, identified a consistent trend of incompleteness and imprecision in catechetical texts being published at that time in the United States. He summarized this trend in a list of ten categories (see Appendix One below). Contemporary hymnody seems to have fared better than the catechetical texts Archbishop Buechlein's committee examined, and in some cases (such as #2) dramatically better. But, since contemporary hymnody and contemporary catechetical texts evolved, to some extent, together, it can be useful to use this list of ten imprecisions to alert a bishop, pastor, or liturgical music minister to deficiencies they may find in hymns, or in a collection of hymns as a whole. From our own reading of approximately 1000 hymns composed and published mostly in the period 1980-2015, we would advise pastors and liturgical music ministers to be especially attentive to the following categories of potential deficiencies:

### **1. Deficiencies in the Presentation of Eucharistic Doctrine**

- a. This deficiency, by far the most common and the most serious, corresponds to #7 in Archbishop Buechlein's list, "inadequate presentation of the sacraments." Since the Eucharist is the "source and summit of the Christian life" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11), deficiencies in Eucharistic doctrine affect other teachings, such as the Church (because "the Eucharist makes the Church," *CCC*, no. 1396) and the priesthood (because the priest effects the sacramental presence of Christ the High Priest). Catholics nurtured on a steady diet of certain hymns will learn from them that at Mass we come together to share bread and wine, which remain bread and wine, a common meal, even if under special circumstances. They will learn that the bread and wine signify in some vague way the presence of Jesus, but they will not be given a basis to understand the Catholic belief that the Eucharistic elements can be worshipped because under their appearance is a wholly unique, substantial presence of Christ. These hymns correspondingly also downplay or eliminate entirely reference to the sacrifice of Christ, his priesthood, and his status as both priest and victim, as well as to the role of the ministerial priesthood in the Church. A steady diet of these hymns would erode Catholic sensibility regarding the fullness of Eucharistic teaching, on the Mass as sacrifice, and eventually on the Church, as formed by that sacrifice.

- b. Catholic teaching on the Eucharist is summed up in the *CCC*, nos. 1322-1419; Appendix Two provides a summary account useful for assessing hymn lyrics with regard to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, a distinctive and unique presence.
- c. Eucharistic doctrine has developed, and depends upon, a high degree of precision of language. For example, Christ is not present "in" bread and wine, but rather the substance of bread and wine ceases to exist as such and Christ is substantially present under the appearance of bread and wine. Hymn lyrics do not have to reproduce technical language, but they should be guided by the customary usage of Scripture and liturgical Tradition. This would mean:
- i. Language that implies that the elements are still bread and wine after consecration should be avoided;
  - ii. Language that implies the bread and wine, still bread and wine, are merely symbols of another reality or person, should be avoided;
  - iii. Poetic license should conform to customary usage of Scripture and liturgical Tradition. "Bread," "Bread of Life," etc., are scriptural synecdoches for the Eucharist itself, and so are permitted; however, "wine" is not used in the same way, and to call the consecrated element "wine" gives the impression that it is still wine. This, in turn, has an impact on the way the word "bread" is heard, so that legitimate uses of the word "bread" are heard differently, not as a synecdoche for the Eucharist as a whole, but as a reference to the element which remains bread. Scripture speaks of the "cup," not of "wine" (see 1 Cor: 10.16-17).
- d. Examples:
- i. "God is Here! As We His People"<sup>1</sup>--This hymn speaks of "symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace." We hear that, "as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old." Bread and wine are still bread and wine.
  - ii. "Now in This Banquet."<sup>2</sup> "Now in this banquet, Christ is our bread; Here shall all hunger be fed. Bread that is broken, wine that is poured, Love is the sign of our Lord." "Bread that is broken" is scriptural but, when this phrase is paired with "wine that is poured," both become indications of simple bread and wine. There is no scriptural language that calls the Eucharist, outright, "wine." The hymn singer receives the impression that the wine is still wine, and that this is a banquet where "love" is the sign, and Christ, in some spiritual sense, is our

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<sup>1</sup> © 1979 Hope Publishing Co.; see *One in Faith*, no. 809 (Franklin Park, Illinois: World Library Publications, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> © 1986, GIA Publications, Inc.: see *Gather*, no. 833 (Chicago: GIA Publications, Third Edition).

bread. Catholic usage has bread and wine as the "signs" under whose appearance Christ's sacrificial love is substantially present. Love is not the "sign" but the reality. Again, the image is that of the Eucharist as a spiritual banquet with ordinary food, bread and wine. The words offer no hint that the Mass is the sacrifice of Christ re-presented.

- iii. "All Are Welcome."<sup>1</sup> – "Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat; A banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet ..." The image of the Eucharist is of an ordinary banquet where one drinks water and wine and eats wheat bread. Further, water is not on the same level as bread and wine as matter for the Eucharist, and to list them in sequence therefore only increases the implication that we are at a banquet eating ordinary food together. There is nothing else in the hymn to mitigate this impression. Someone who sings this song frequently would have a hard time imagining that the Eucharist can be and is worshipped or is in any sense a "sacrifice." The hymn is also objectionable throughout on ecclesiological grounds as well, since it repeats the phrase "Let us build a house ..." as though our actions make the Church. This hymn shows the relationship between faulty Eucharistic theology and faulty ecclesiology. As the *Catechism* says (see above), "The Eucharist makes the Church," and this idea is intimately connected with the Eucharist as re-presenting the sacrifice of the Cross which makes the Church. This song therefore exhibits deficiencies nos. 3, 5, and 7 from Archbishop Buechlein's list.
- iv. "Let Us Break Bread Together on Our Knees"<sup>2</sup> Verse 2: "Let us drink wine together on our knees ..." Here, too, the reference to "wine" is used in a way that indicates only the presence of ordinary wine.
- v. Some Eucharistic hymns, both new and old, without these deficiencies: "Ave Verum Corpus," "Taste and See," "You Satisfy the Hungry Heart," "Seed Scattered and Sown," "I am the Bread of Life," "One Bread One Body," "Eat This Bread," "Look Beyond," "At That First Eucharist," "O Sacrament Most Holy," "O Salutaris Hostia," "Adoro Te," "At the Lamb's High Feast" (uses the word "wine" but in a way that makes it clear that it is not wine but Christ's Blood), etc.

## 2. Deficiencies in the Presentation of Trinitarian Doctrine

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<sup>1</sup> © 1994, GIA Publications, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> See *One in Faith*, no. 572 (Franklin Park, Illinois: World Library Publications, 2014).

- a. These deficiencies correspond to tendency no. 1 on Archbishop Buechlein's list, especially as he explains that these deficiencies often result from "a reluctance to use 'Father' for the First Person of the Trinity."
- b. Use of the Guidelines here would involve:
  - i. Avoiding language that implies God has "parts" (since the substance of God is undivided);
  - ii. Avoiding doxologies or Trinitarian invocations that mix words that designate *relations* (i.e., that designate the Persons, who are distinct in relation and relation only) with other kinds of predication that can apply to all three persons equally. For example, "Creator" can apply to all three Persons, while "Father" and "Son" apply uniquely to the two Persons designated by these relational names.
  - iii. Adherence to the language of the Baptismal Formula as the "default" mode, since departing from it frequently implies that the formula is arbitrary and optional, whereas this language is essential for the valid administration of Baptism.
  - iv. Use of masculine pronouns for God and for each Person of the Trinity, in accordance with *Liturgiam Authenticam*, no 31.
  - v. Substituting "Lord" for the name "Yahweh" (the sacred *Tetragrammaton*), in accordance with *Liturgiam Authenticam*, no 41.
- c. Examples of Application:
  - i. "The Play of the Godhead"<sup>1</sup> Verse 1: "With God the Creator, and Christ the true Son, Entwined with the Spirit, a web daily spun." Because of reluctance to use the word "Father," this is an example of the use of a word ("Creator) that can apply to all three Persons mixed with words ("Son" and "Spirit") that designate unique relations. It implies, therefore, that the First Person is God, and the others are not. This is Arianism, however unintentionally. According to Catholic doctrine, the Son and the Spirit are equally "God the Creator."
  - ii. Other instances are relatively commonplace; for example, one contemporary setting of both the Magnificat and the Benedictus ends with the doxology, "All Glory be to God, Creator blest, To Jesus Christ, God's love made manifest, And to the Holy Spirit, gentle Comforter, All Glory be both now and evermore." This doxology looks even more Arian than the first, because "God, Creator blest"

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<sup>1</sup> © 2002, 2003 GIA Publications; see *Worship*, no. 552 (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2011, Fourth Edition).

stands in an ambiguous relationship at best with "Jesus Christ" and "Holy Spirit." In fact, both could be called, "God, Creator blest," but this doxology makes it look as if they are less than "God, Creator blest."<sup>1</sup>

- iii. "Led by the Spirit,"<sup>2</sup> Verse 4: "Led by the Spirit, now sing praise to God the Trinity: The Source of Life, the living Word made flesh to set us free, The Spirit blowing where it will to make us friends of God ...": "Source of Life" is applicable to all Three Persons, and in particular to the Holy Spirit, who is confessed in Catholic usage as "Lord and Giver of Life." This doxology is therefore most ambiguous. Is the Word God? What relation does He have to "Source of Life"? This doxology, in trying to avoid both "Father" and "Son" language, in effect deconstructs the Trinity into three names whose status, except for the first, is ambiguous at best and who seem unrelated. We are very far from the baptismal formula here.

### **3. Hymns with Deficiencies in the Doctrine of God and His Relation to Humans**

- a. Catholic doctrine regarding God is that "He transcends the world and history" (CCC, no. 212), and yet has revealed his name in an act of self-emptying love, "handing himself over" by making his name known, though it is a name as mysterious as God is (see CCC, nos. 203, 206). Although God transcends all creatures, nevertheless language drawn from the perfections of creatures, while always falling short of the reality, "really does attain to God himself" (CCC, no. 43, see no. 42).
- b. This means that language which makes it seem that God is "beyond all names" is misleading, and language that makes God seem in any way dependent upon human beings or any creature is incorrect.
- c. Examples:
  - i. "God Beyond All Names,"<sup>3</sup> "God Beyond All Names ... All around us we have known you / All creation lives to hold you/ In our living and our dying/ we are bringing you to birth." This fails to respect God's transcendence. God is not dependent upon human actions to bring him into being. Furthermore, God is not "beyond all names," either in the sense of his revelation of his name, or in the sense of analogical language. In the public liturgy of the Church, God is not nameless, but is addressed as "Lord," "Father," etc.

### **4. Hymns with a View of the Church That Sees Her as Essentially a Human Construction.**

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<sup>1</sup> See *Breaking Bread 2008* (Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 2007), nos. 832-33.

<sup>2</sup> © 1996. Published by Oregon Catholic Press; see *Breaking Bread 2008*, #119.

<sup>3</sup> © 1990. Published by Oregon Catholic Press.

- a. Catholic teaching about the Church is summed up in *CCC*, no. 766, where it is explained that the Church is born primarily from Christ's total self-gift, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the Cross, and that as such she is the new Eve born from the side of the new Adam. "Because she is united to Christ as to her bridegroom, she becomes a mystery in her turn" (*CCC*, no. 772), and thus "is in history, but at the same time transcends it" (*CCC*, no. 770).
- b. Hymns should avoid giving the impression that it is primarily our work that builds or makes the Church or the Kingdom of God. Tendencies nos. 5 and 10, and to a lesser extent no. 3, from Archbishop Buechlein's list, are what is at stake here.
- c. Examples:
  - i. "Sing a New Church"<sup>1</sup> -- Refrain: "Sing a new Church into being, one in faith and love and praise." This implies or even states outright that the Church is essentially our creation. It also leaves open the possibility that there could be a new Church replacing the old one.
  - ii. "As a Fire is Meant for Burning,"<sup>2</sup> Verse 1: "As a fire is meant for burning, With a bright and warming flame, So the Church is meant for mission, Giving glory to God's name. Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care, We join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere." This seems a seriously deficient account of the evangelizing mission of the Church, particularly, the rejection of preaching "our creeds and customs."

## 5. Hymns with Doctrinally Incorrect Views of the Jewish People

- a. See Appendix Four for a summary of Catholic doctrine on the Jews and their relationship to the death of Christ. To blame the Jews indiscriminately for Christ's Passion is to ignore the doctrine that all sinners are responsible for Christ's Passion. The Second Vatican Council made it clear that "what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 4). This deficiency reflects deficiency #8 on Archbishop Buechlein's list, an inadequate appreciation of the doctrine of original sin.
- b. Application of the Guidelines here will rule out hymn verses that imply that the Jews as a people are collectively responsible for the death of Christ.
- c. Examples:

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<sup>1</sup> © 1991, Sisters of St. Benedict. Published by Oregon Catholic Press.

<sup>2</sup> © 1992, GIA publications.

- i. "The Lord of the Dance"<sup>1</sup>: Verse 3: "I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame/ The Holy People said it was a shame/ They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high/ And they left me there on a Cross to die." The phrase "Holy People," referring to the Jews, is used sarcastically. And the whole Holy People did not reject Jesus, nor crucify him. Some Jews and some Romans did it. (NB: The classical "Reproaches" should not be placed in this category, because the phrase "my people" can and does refer equally well to the pilgrim People of God, the Church.)
- ii. "O Crucified Messiah,"<sup>2</sup> Verse 1: "Scorned, denied and beaten, mocked and defiled, forsaken by his people, given up to die," is simply untrue and therefore unorthodox. Jesus was not forsaken and left to die by his people as a whole. Again, Archbishop Buechlein's no. 8, on original sin, is relevant, because "all sinners are the authors of Christ's passion" (CCC #598) means that all sinners need redemption because of original sin.

## 6. Hymns with Incorrect Christian Anthropology

- a. This category intersects with some of the above categories, but in other cases stands alone. One or more of Archbishop Buechlein's categories 4 and/or 8, and perhaps also 5, apply.
- b. Example: "Canticle of the Sun,"<sup>3</sup>--Verse 6: "Praise for our death that makes our life real, The knowledge of loss that helps us to feel." Death is the punishment of original sin. Far from making our life real, it makes our life less "real" than it was in Adam. This verse teaches that death is natural and necessary for our life to have something at stake and thus be "real." In fact, it is the Resurrection of Christ that makes our life "real," restoring what we had lost in Adam, and it is the Passion of Christ, not death per se, that "helps us to feel." Death is not a necessary part of human nature (see CCC ##400, 402, 405).

## Conclusion

The Second Vatican Council was quite emphatic about the importance of sacred music in the Church's liturgical worship: "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 112). The Council also made it clear that this great value derives precisely from the union of music and words: "The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy" (no. 112). When the Council exhorts composers to "produce compositions which have

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<sup>1</sup> © 1963, Stainer & Bell; see *One in Faith*, no. 631 (Franklin Park, Illinois: World Library Publications, 2014)

<sup>2</sup> © 2003. Published by OCP.

<sup>3</sup> © 1980, GIA Publications.

the qualities proper to genuine sacred music" (no. 121), chief among these qualities must be the use of words that are appropriate for liturgical worship.

In this document we have endeavored to identify and to reflect on the role that these words--the lyrics--have in music intended for use in the liturgy. It is our hope that this guidance will help insure that all the sacred music employed in liturgical celebrations will achieve its purpose, "which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful" (no. 112).

## *Appendix One:*

### Archbishop Buechlein's Report on Ten Common Deficiencies in Catechetical Materials

#### **1. There is insufficient attention to the Trinity and the Trinitarian structure of Catholic beliefs and teachings**

Catechetical texts fail at times to present the Trinity as the central mystery of the Christian faith. The language used in referring to the Persons of the Trinity contributes at times to a lack of clarity. This is most evident in the reluctance to use "Father" for the first person of the Trinity and, at times, to substitute "Parent God" for God the Father. Particularly, the relationship between Jesus and the Father is often weak. There are times where the word "God" is placed in a sentence where one would expect to find "Father" or "God the Father" since the reference is precisely to the relationship between the first and second persons of the Trinity.

#### **2. There is an obscured presentation of the centrality of Christ in salvation history and an insufficient emphasis on the divinity of Christ**

Texts fall short, at times, in presenting Jesus as the culmination of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of God's plan for our salvation. The indispensable place of the Incarnation in the plan of salvation is not always sufficiently presented. Jesus the Savior is often overshadowed by Jesus the teacher, model, friend and brother. It is a question of imbalance.

Some texts do not present the mystery of the Incarnation in its fullness. Often there appears to be an imbalance in the instruction on the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. At times, we detect a negative undertone in speaking of the divine nature of Christ, as if divinity is equated with being "distant and unreal."

#### **3. Another trend is an indistinct treatment of the ecclesial context of Catholic beliefs and magisterial teachings**

Catechetical materials do not always clearly present the Church as established by Christ to continue both his presence and his mission in the world. The teaching function of the Church and its apostolic nature, as well as the role of the hierarchy and the concept of the leadership of bishops and priests in teaching the Word of God are often undertreated. The mark of unity in the Church is at times eclipsed by an emphasis on the Church's catholicity and diversity.

#### **4. There is an inadequate sense of a distinctively Christian anthropology**

By and large the catechetical texts do not seem to integrate the fundamental notions that human persons are by nature religious, that the desire for God is written in the human heart and that the human person is inherently spiritual and not reducible to the merely material. Neither are the texts generally clear that it is precisely in Christ that we have been created in the image and likeness of God. Nor do they emphasize that Christ has restored to us the divine image of God, an image disfigured by sin. Rather, too often the impression is left that the human person is the first principle and final end of his/her own existence.

#### **5. There is a trend that gives insufficient emphasis on God 's initiative in the world with a corresponding overemphasis on human action**

Texts do not adequately emphasize that human action is intended to follow upon God's action and initiative in the world. When the methodological starting point is predominately human experience, the texts leave the impression that our human initiative is the prerequisite for divine action. God's initiative at times appears subordinate to human experience and human action.

#### **6. We have detected an insufficient recognition of the transforming effects of grace**

The catechetical texts tend to present an inadequate understanding of grace. Rather often it is described as God's love, then not much more is said about it. That the preparation of the human person for the reception of grace is already a work of grace is not clearly presented. Grace is not generally treated as God's initiative which introduces humanity into the intimacy of Trinitarian life and makes us his adopted children and participants in his life. The texts are generally weak in treating the particular efficacy of the grace proper to the respective sacraments.

#### **7. We have found a pattern of inadequate presentation of the sacraments**

Catechetical texts often do not treat the sacraments within the Paschal Mystery, that is, the sacraments are not explicitly presented as the means by which we share in the new life of Christ through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Sacraments are often presented as important events in human life of which God becomes a part, rather than as effective signs of divine life in which humans participate. Consequently, this leads to a deficient understanding of the divine action

and the graced transformation that is at the heart of each of the sacraments. Particularly, the sacraments of the Eucharist and Holy Orders evidence deficiency because the texts usually do not present the character and role of the ordained minister in the life of the ecclesial community.

**8. We have seen a pattern of deficiency in the teaching on original sin and sin in general**

In general, the texts do not clearly teach that original sin is the loss of original holiness and justice, transmitted by our first parents, and that it wounds human nature in all people. Too often the texts do not address how the doctrine of original sin informs other doctrines, for example, grace, baptism, sin, and redemption.

**9. We have found a meager exposition of Christian moral life**

At times an over-emphasis on personal identity and self-respect gives the impression that these are the primary "sources" of morality. Too often the source of morality found in God's revealed law, as taught by the Church and grounded in natural law, are not adequately treated. Where texts could present the binding force of the Church's moral teaching in certain areas, often they do not. In addition, instruction on what is necessary for the formation of a correct conscience is either inadequately or even mistakenly presented.

**10. Finally, we have found an inadequate presentation of eschatology**

The eschatological aspect of Catholic doctrine is often underemphasized. The transcendent, trans-temporal and trans-historical nature of the Kingdom is not always present. The general judgment, the concept of hell and the eschatological dimensions of the Beatitudes as well as the moral and sacramental orders are not always adequately taught.

*Oral Report to the General Assembly of Bishops*

*Archbishop Daniel Buechlein*

*June 19, 1997*

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/archbishop-daniel-buechlein-report-june-1997.cfm>

See also Schroeder, C. J. (2015). "The USCCB Curriculum Framework: Origins, Questions, And A Call For Research." *Journal of Catholic Education*, 19 (1). [http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/\\_joce.19Q1022\(\)15](http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/_joce.19Q1022()15)

## Appendix Two:

### Summary of Catholic Teaching on the Eucharistic Presence (Selections from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

1. 1324 The Eucharist is the "source and summit of the Christian Life (LG 11). "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 5).
2. 1366 The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the Cross ...; 1367 The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice* [emphasis original].
3. 1374 The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend." In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained." "This presence is called 'real' - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present."
4. 1376 The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."
5. 1378 Worship of the Eucharist. In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."
6. 1396: The Eucharist makes the Church. (Cf. 766).

### *Appendix Three:*

### *Summary of Catholic Teaching on the Trinity (Selections from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*)*

232 Christians are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" Before receiving the sacrament, they respond to a three-part question when asked to confess the Father, the Son and the Spirit: "I do." "The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity."

234 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith". The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin".

255 The divine persons are relative to one another. Because it does not divide the divine unity, the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another: "In the relational names of the persons the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance." Indeed "everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship." "Because of that unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son."

## Appendix Four:

### Summary of Catholic Doctrine on the Jews and Christ's Death (Selections from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*)

#### **Jews are not collectively responsible for Jesus' death**

597 The historical complexity of Jesus' trial is apparent in the Gospel accounts. the personal sin of the participants (Judas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate) is known to God alone. Hence we cannot lay responsibility for the trial on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole, despite the outcry of a manipulated crowd and the global reproaches contained in the apostles' calls to conversion after Pentecost. Jesus himself, in forgiving them on the cross, and Peter in following suit, both accept "the ignorance" of the Jews of Jerusalem and even of their leaders. Still less can we extend responsibility to other Jews of different times and places, based merely on the crowd's cry: "His blood be on us and on our children!", a formula for ratifying a judicial sentence. As the Church declared at the Second Vatican Council:

Neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his Passion. . . the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture.

#### **All sinners were the authors of Christ's Passion**

598 In her Magisterial teaching of the faith and in the witness of her saints, the Church has never forgotten that "[all]sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured." Taking into account the fact that our sins affect Christ himself, The Church does not hesitate to impute to Christians the gravest responsibility for the torments inflicted upon Jesus, a responsibility with which they have all too often burdened the Jews alone:

We must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins. Since our sins made the Lord Christ suffer the torment of the cross, those who plunge themselves into disorders and crimes crucify the Son of God anew in their hearts (for he is in them) and hold him up to contempt. And it can be seen that our crime in this case is greater in us than in the Jews. As for them, according to the witness of the Apostle, "None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." We, however, profess to know him. And when we deny him by our deeds, we in some way seem to lay violent hands on him.

# Historical Documents

# Tra Le Sollecitudini (1903)

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*This instruction from Pope Pius X is widely regarded as the opening salvo of the liturgical reform movement that precipitated the Second Vatican Council. Though no longer binding, the fact that this document has been cited by every document on liturgical music to come after it has cemented the general principles of Tra Le Sollecitudini in the perennial teaching of the Church. Included with this instruction is the accompanying letter to the Vicar-General of Rome, which provides more detail and texture to the Pope's desires regarding liturgical music.*

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## Preface

Among the cares of the pastoral office, not only of this Supreme Chair, which We, though unworthy, occupy through the inscrutable dispositions of Providence, but of every local church, a leading one is without question that of maintaining and promoting the decorum of the House of God in which the august mysteries of religion are celebrated, and where the Christian people assemble to receive the grace of the Sacraments, to assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, to adore the most august Sacrament of the Lord's Body and to unite in the common prayer of the Church in the public and solemn liturgical offices. Nothing should have place, therefore, in the temple calculated to disturb or even merely to diminish the piety and devotion of the faithful, nothing that may give reasonable cause for disgust or scandal, nothing, above all, which directly offends the decorum and sanctity of the sacred functions and is thus unworthy of the House of Prayer and of the Majesty of God. We do not touch separately on the abuses in this matter which may arise. Today Our attention is directed to one of the most common of them, one of the most difficult to eradicate, and the existence of which is sometimes to be deplored in places where everything else is deserving of the highest praise — the beauty and sumptuousness of the temple, the splendor and the accurate performance of the ceremonies, the attendance of the clergy, the gravity and piety of the officiating ministers. Such is the abuse affecting sacred chant and music. And indeed, whether it is owing to the very nature of this art, fluctuating and variable as it is in itself, or to the succeeding changes in tastes and habits with the course of time, or to the fatal influence exercised on sacred art by profane and theatrical art, or to the pleasure that music directly produces, and that is not always easily contained within the right limits, or finally to the many prejudices on the matter, so lightly introduced and so tenaciously maintained even among responsible and pious persons, the fact remains that there is a general tendency to deviate from the right rule, prescribed by the end for which art is admitted to the service of public worship and which is set forth very clearly in the ecclesiastical Canons, in the Ordinances of the General and Provincial Councils, in the prescriptions which have at various times emanated from the Sacred Roman Congregations, and from Our Predecessors the Sovereign Pontiffs.

It is with real satisfaction that We acknowledge the large amount of good that has been effected in this respect during the last decade in this Our fostering city of Rome, and in many churches in Our country, but in a more especial way among some nations in which illustrious men, full of zeal for the worship of God, have, with the approval of the Holy See and under the direction of the Bishops, united in flourishing Societies and restored sacred music to the fullest honor in all their churches and chapels. Still

the good work that has been done is very far indeed from being common to all, and when We consult Our own personal experience and take into account the great number of complaints that have reached Us during the short time that has elapsed since it pleased the Lord to elevate Our humility to the supreme summit of the Roman Pontificate, We consider it Our first duty, without further delay, to raise Our voice at once in reproof and condemnation of all that is seen to be out of harmony with the right rule above indicated, in the functions of public worship and in the performance of the ecclesiastical offices. Filled as We are with a most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit flourish in every respect and be preserved by all the faithful, We deem it necessary to provide before anything else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and indispensable font, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. And it is vain to hope that the blessing of heaven will descend abundantly upon us, when our homage to the Most High, instead of ascending in the odor of sweetness, puts into the hand of the Lord the scourges wherewith of old the Divine Redeemer drove the unworthy profaners from the Temple.

Hence, in order that no one for the future may be able to plead in excuse that he did not clearly understand his duty and that all vagueness may be eliminated from the interpretation of matters which have already been commanded, We have deemed it expedient to point out briefly the principles regulating sacred music in the functions of public worship, and to gather together in a general survey the principal prescriptions of the Church against the more common abuses in this subject. We do therefore publish, *motu proprio* and with certain knowledge, Our present Instruction to which, as to a juridical code of sacred music (*quasi a codice giuridice della musica sacra*), We will with the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority that the force of law be given, and We do by Our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all.

## I. General principles

1. Sacred music, being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy, participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful. It contributes to the decorum and the splendor of the ecclesiastical ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries.

2. Sacred music should consequently possess, in the highest degree, the qualities proper to the liturgy, and in particular sanctity and goodness of form, which will spontaneously produce the final quality of universality.

It must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.

It must be true art, for otherwise it will be impossible for it to exercise on the minds of those who listen to it that efficacy which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her liturgy the art of musical sounds.

But it must, at the same time, be universal in the sense that while every nation is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinated in such a manner to the general characteristics of sacred music that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing them.

## II. The different kinds of sacred music

3. These qualities are to be found, in the highest degree, in Gregorian Chant, which is, consequently the Chant proper to the Roman Church, the only chant she has inherited from the ancient fathers, which she has jealously guarded for centuries in her liturgical codices, which she directly proposes to the faithful as her own, which she prescribes exclusively for some parts of the liturgy, and which the most recent studies have so happily restored to their integrity and purity.

On these grounds Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule: the more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple.

The ancient traditional Gregorian Chant must, therefore, in a large measure be restored to the functions of public worship, and the fact must be accepted by all that an ecclesiastical function loses none of its solemnity when accompanied by this music alone.

Special efforts are to be made to restore the use of the Gregorian Chant by the people, so that the faithful may again take a more active part in the ecclesiastical offices, as was the case in ancient times.

4. The above-mentioned qualities are also possessed in an excellent degree by Classic Polyphony, especially of the Roman School, which reached its greatest perfection in the sixteenth century, owing to the works of Pierluigi da Palestrina, and continued subsequently to produce compositions of excellent quality from a liturgical and musical standpoint. Classic Polyphony agrees admirably with Gregorian Chant, the supreme model of all sacred music, and hence it has been found worthy of a place side by side with Gregorian Chant, in the more solemn functions of the Church, such as those of the Pontifical Chapel. This, too, must therefore be restored largely in ecclesiastical functions, especially in the more important basilicas, in cathedrals, and in the churches and chapels of seminaries and other ecclesiastical institutions in which the necessary means are usually not lacking.

5. The Church has always recognized and favored the progress of the arts, admitting to the service of religion everything good and beautiful discovered by genius in the course of ages — always, however, with due regard to the liturgical laws. Consequently modern music is also admitted to the Church, since it, too, furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety and gravity, that they are in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions.

Still, since modern music has risen mainly to serve profane uses, greater care must be taken with regard to it, in order that the musical compositions of modern style which are admitted in the Church may contain nothing profane, be free from reminiscences of motifs adopted in the theaters, and be not fashioned even in their external forms after the manner of profane pieces.

6. Among the different kinds of modern music, that which appears less suitable for accompanying the functions of public worship is the theatrical style, which was in the greatest vogue, especially in Italy, during the last century. This of its very nature is diametrically opposed to Gregorian Chant and classic polyphony, and therefore to the most important law of all good sacred music. Besides the intrinsic structure, the rhythm and what is known as the conventionalism of this style adapt themselves but badly to the requirements of true liturgical music.

### III. The liturgical text

7. The language proper to the Roman Church is Latin. Hence it is forbidden to sing anything whatever in the vernacular in solemn liturgical functions — much more to sing in the vernacular the variable or common parts of the Mass and Office.

8. As the texts that may be rendered in music, and the order in which they are to be rendered, are determined for every liturgical function, it is not lawful to confuse this order or to change the prescribed texts for others selected at will, or to omit them either entirely or even in part, unless when the rubrics allow that some versicles of the text be supplied with the organ, while these versicles are simply recited in the choir. However, it is permissible, according to the custom of the Roman Church, to sing a motet to the Blessed Sacrament after the Benedictus in a solemn Mass. It is also permitted, after the Offertory prescribed for the mass has been sung, to execute during the time that remains a brief motet to words approved by the Church.

9. The liturgical text must be sung as it is in the books, without alteration or inversion of the words, without undue repetition, without breaking syllables, and always in a manner intelligible to the faithful who listen.

### IV. External form of the sacred compositions

10. The different parts of the mass and the Office must retain, even musically, that particular concept and form which ecclesiastical tradition has assigned to them, and which is admirably brought out by Gregorian Chant. The method of composing an introit, a gradual, an antiphon, a psalm, a hymn, a *Gloria in excelsis*, etc., must therefore be distinct from one another.

11. In particular the following rules are to be observed:

(a) The *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, etc., of the Mass must preserve the unity of composition proper to the text. It is not lawful, therefore, to compose them in separate movements, in such a way that each of these movements form a complete composition in itself, and be capable of being detached from the rest and substituted by another.

(b) In the office of Vespers it should be the rule to follow the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*, which prescribes Gregorian Chant for the psalmody and permits figured music for the versicles of the *Gloria Patri* and the hymn.

It will nevertheless be lawful on greater solemnities to alternate the Gregorian Chant of the choir with the so called falsi-bordoni or with verses similarly composed in a proper manner.

It is also permissible occasionally to render single psalms in their entirety in music, provided the form proper to psalmody be preserved in such compositions; that is to say, provided the singers seem to be psalmody among themselves, either with new motifs or with those taken from Gregorian Chant or based upon it.

The psalms known as *di concerto* are therefore forever excluded and prohibited.

(c) In the hymns of the Church the traditional form of the hymn is preserved. It is not lawful, therefore, to compose, for instance, a *Tantum ergo* in such wise that the first strophe presents a romanza, a *cavatina*, an *adagio* and the *Genitori an allegro*.

(d) The antiphons of the Vespers must be as a rule rendered with the Gregorian melody proper to each. Should they, however, in some special case be sung in figured music, they must never have either the form of a concert melody or the fullness of a *motet* or a *cantata*.

## V. The singers

12. With the exception of the melodies proper to the celebrant at the altar and to the ministers, which must be always sung in Gregorian Chant, and without accompaniment of the organ, all the rest of the liturgical chant belongs to the choir of levites, and, therefore, singers in the church, even when they are laymen, are really taking the place of the ecclesiastical choir. Hence the music rendered by them must, at least for the greater part, retain the character of choral music.

By this it is not to be understood that solos are entirely excluded. But solo singing should never predominate to such an extent as to have the greater part of the liturgical chant executed in that manner; the solo phrase should have the character or hint of a melodic projection (*spunto*), and be strictly bound up with the rest of the choral composition.

13. On the same principle it follows that singers in church have a real liturgical office, and that therefore women, being incapable of exercising such office, cannot be admitted to form part of the choir. Whenever, then, it is desired to employ the acute voices of sopranos and contraltos, these parts must be taken by boys, according to the most ancient usage of the Church.

14. Finally, only men of known piety and probity of life are to be admitted to form part of the choir of a church, and these men should by their modest and devout bearing during the liturgical functions show that they are worthy of the holy office they exercise. It will also be fitting that singers while singing in church wear the ecclesiastical habit and surplice, and that they be hidden behind gratings when the choir is excessively open to the public gaze.

## VI. Organ and instruments

15. Although the music proper to the Church is purely vocal music, music with the accompaniment of the organ is also permitted. In some special cases, within due limits and with proper safeguards, other instruments may be allowed, but never without the special permission of the Ordinary, according to prescriptions of the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum*.

16. As the singing should always have the principal place, the organ or other instruments should merely sustain and never oppress it.

17. It is not permitted to have the chant preceded by long preludes or to interrupt it with intermezzo pieces.

18. The sound of the organ as an accompaniment to the chant in preludes, interludes, and the like must be not only governed by the special nature of the instrument, but must participate in all the qualities proper to sacred music as above enumerated.

19. The employment of the piano is forbidden in church, as is also that of noisy or frivolous instruments such as drums, cymbals, bells and the like.

20. It is strictly forbidden to have bands play in church, and only in special cases with the consent of the Ordinary will it be permissible to admit wind instruments, limited in number, judiciously used, and proportioned to the size of the place provided the composition and accompaniment be written in grave and suitable style, and conform in all respects to that proper to the organ.

21. In processions outside the church the Ordinary may give permission for a band, provided no profane pieces be executed. It would be desirable in such cases that the band confine itself to accompanying some spiritual canticle sung in Latin or in the vernacular by the singers and the pious associations which take part in the procession.

## VII. The length of the liturgical chant

22. It is not lawful to keep the priest at the altar waiting on account of the chant or the music for a length of time not allowed by the liturgy. According to the ecclesiastical prescriptions the *Sanctus* of the Mass should be over before the elevation, and therefore the priest must here have regard for the singers. The *Gloria* and the *Credo* ought, according to the Gregorian tradition, to be relatively short.

23. In general it must be considered a very grave abuse when the liturgy in ecclesiastical functions is made to appear secondary to and in a manner at the service of the music, for the music is merely a part of the liturgy and its humble handmaid.

## VIII. Principal means

24. For the exact execution of what has been herein laid down, the Bishops, if they have not already done so, are to institute in their dioceses a special Commission composed of persons really competent in sacred music, and to this Commission let them entrust in the manner they find most suitable the task of watching over the music executed in their churches. Nor are they to see merely that the music is good in itself, but also that it is adapted to the powers of the singers and be always well executed.

25. In seminaries of clerics and in ecclesiastical institutions let the above-mentioned traditional Gregorian Chant be cultivated by all with diligence and love, according to the Tridentine prescriptions, and let the superiors be liberal of encouragement and praise toward their young subjects. In like manner

let a *Schola Cantorum* be established, whenever possible, among the clerics for the execution of sacred polyphony and of good liturgical music.

26. In the ordinary lessons of Liturgy, Morals, and Canon Law given to the students of theology, let care be taken to touch on those points which regard more directly the principles and laws of sacred music, and let an attempt be made to complete the doctrine with some particular instruction in the aesthetic side of sacred art, so that the clerics may not leave the seminary ignorant of all those subjects so necessary to a full ecclesiastical education.

27. Let care be taken to restore, at least in the principal churches, the ancient *Scholae Cantorum*, as has been done with excellent fruit in a great many places. It is not difficult for a zealous clergy to institute such Scholae even in smaller churches and country parishes nay, in these last the pastors will find a very easy means of gathering around them both children and adults, to their own profit and the edification of the people.

28. Let efforts be made to support and promote, in the best way possible, the higher schools of sacred music where these already exist, and to help in founding them where they do not. It is of the utmost importance that the Church herself provide for the instruction of her choirmasters, organists, and singers, according to the true principles of sacred art.

## IX. Conclusion

29. Finally, it is recommended to choirmasters, singers, members of the clergy, superiors of seminaries, ecclesiastical institutions, and religious communities, parish priests and rectors of churches, canons of collegiate churches and cathedrals, and, above all, to the diocesan ordinaries to favor with all zeal these prudent reforms, long desired and demanded with united voice by all; so that the authority of the Church, which herself has repeatedly proposed them, and now inculcates them, may not fall into contempt.

Given from Our Apostolic Palace at the Vatican, on the day of the Virgin and martyr, Saint Cecilia, November 22, 1903, in the first year of Our Pontificate.

**Pius X, Pope**

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## Papal Letter to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome

The carrying out of the above regulations for the restoration of sacred music is laid upon **Cardinal Respighi**, Vicar-General of Rome, in the following letter from His Holiness, Pope Pius X.

Lord Cardinal,

A desire to see the decorum, dignity and holiness of the liturgical functions flourishing again in all places has determined Us to make known by a special writing under Our own hand Our will with regard to the sacred music which is employed in the service of public worship. We cherish the hope that all will

second Us in this desired restoration, not merely with that blind submission, always laudable though it be, which is accorded out of a pure spirit of obedience to commands that are onerous and contrary to one's own manner of thinking and feeling, but with that alacrity of will which springs from the intimate persuasion of having to do so on grounds duly weighed, clear, evident, and beyond question.

Even a little reflection on the end for which art is admitted to the service of public worship, and on the supreme fitness of offering to the Lord only things in themselves good, and where possible excellent, will at once serve to show that the prescriptions of the Church regarding sacred music are but the immediate application of those two fundamental principles. When the clergy and choirmasters are penetrated with them, good sacred music flourishes spontaneously, as has been constantly observed, and continues to be observed in a great many places; when on the contrary those principles are neglected, neither prayers, admonitions, severe and repeated orders nor threats of canonical penalties suffice to effect any change; for passion, and when not passion a shameful and inexcusable ignorance, always finds a means of eluding the will of the Church, and continuing for years in the same reprehensible way.

This alacrity of will We look for in a very special way among the clergy and faithful of this beloved City of Rome, the center of Christendom and the seat of the Supreme Authority of the Church. Indeed it would seem but natural that none should feel more deeply the influence of Our word than those who hear it directly from our mouth, and that the example of loving and filial submission to Our fatherly invitations should be given with greater solicitude by none more than by that first and most noble portion of the flock of Christ, the Church of Rome, which has been specially entrusted to Our pastoral care as Bishop. Besides, This example is to be given in the sight of the whole world. Bishops and the faithful are continually coming here from all lands to honor the Vicar of Christ and to renew their spirit by visiting our venerable basilicas and the tombs of the martyrs, and by assisting with redoubled fervor at the solemnities which are here celebrated with all pomp and splendor throughout the year. *"Optamus ne moribus nostris offensi recedant,"* said Our predecessor Benedict XIV in his own time in his Encyclical Letter *Annus qui*, speaking of this very subject of sacred music: "We desire that they may not return to their own countries scandalized by our customs."

And farther on, touching on the abuse of instruments which then prevailed, the same Pontiff said: "What opinion will be formed of us by those, who, coming from countries in which instruments are not used in church, hear them in our churches, just as they might in theaters and other profane places? They will come, too, from places and countries where there is singing and music in the churches of the same king as in ours. But if they are persons of sound judgment, they must be grieved not to find in our music that remedy for the evil in their own churches which they came hither to seek." In other times the contradiction between the music usually executed in the churches and the ecclesiastical laws and prescriptions was, perhaps, far less noticeable, and the scandal caused by this contradiction was doubtless more circumscribed, precisely because the evil was more widely diffused and general. But now that so much study has been employed by distinguished men in explaining the liturgy and the art used in the service of public worship, now that such consoling, and not infrequently, such splendid results have been obtained in so many churches throughout the world in the restoration of sacred music, notwithstanding the very serious difficulties that had to be faced, and that have been happily overcome; now, in fine, that the necessity of a complete change in the order of things has come to be universally appreciated, every abuse in this matter becomes intolerable, and must be removed.

You, therefore, Lord cardinal, in your high office as Our Vicar in Rome for spiritual matters, will, We are sure, exert yourself with the gentleness that is characteristic of you, but with equal firmness, to the end that the music executed in the churches and the chapels of the secular and regular clergy of this City may be in entire harmony with Our instructions. There is much to be corrected or removed in the chants of the mass, of the Litany of Loretto, of the Eucharistic hymn, but that which needs a thorough renewal is the singing of the Vespers of the feasts celebrated in the different churches and basilicas. The liturgical prescriptions of the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* and the beautiful musical traditions of the classical Roman school are no longer to be found. For the devout psalmody of the clergy, in which the people also used to join, there have been substituted interminable musical compositions on the words of the psalms, all of them modeled on old theatrical works, and most of them of such meager artistic value that they would not be tolerated for a moment even in our second-rate concerts. It is certain that Christian piety and devotion are not promoted by them; the curiosity of some of the less intelligent is fed, but the majority, disgusted and scandalized, wonder how it is that such an abuse can still survive. We therefore wish the cause to be completely extirpated, and that the solemnity of Vespers should be celebrated according to the liturgical rules indicated by Us. The Patriarchal basilicas will lead the way by the example of solicitous care and enlightened zeal of the Lord cardinals who preside over them, and with these will vie especially the minor basilicas, and the collegiate and parochial churches, as well as the churches and chapels of the religious orders. And do you Lord cardinal, neither accept excuses nor concede delays. The difficulty is not diminished but rather augmented by postponement, and since the thing is to be done, let it be done immediately and resolutely. Let all have confidence in Us and in Our word, with which heavenly grace and blessing are united. At first the novelty will produce some wonder among individuals; here and there a leader or director of a choir may find himself somewhat unprepared; but little by little things will right themselves, and in the perfect harmony between the music with the liturgical rules and the nature of the psalmody all will discern a beauty and a goodness which have perhaps never been observed. The Vespers service will indeed be notably shortened. But if the rectors of the churches desire on a special occasion to prolong the function somewhat, in order to detain the people who are wont so laudably to go in the evening to the particular church where the feast is being celebrated, there is nothing to hinder the many, it will rather be so much gained for the piety and edification of the faithful — if they have a suitable sermon after the Vespers, closed with Solemn Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Finally, We desire that sacred music be cultivated with special care and in the proper way in all the seminaries and ecclesiastical colleges of Rome, in which such a large and choice body of young clerics from all parts of the world are being educated in the sacred sciences and in the ecclesiastical spirit. We know, and We are greatly comforted by the knowledge, that in some institutions sacred music is in such a flourishing condition that it may serve as a model for others. But there are some seminaries and colleges which leave much to be desired owing to the carelessness of the superiors, or the want of capacity and the imperfect taste of the persons to whom the teaching of chant and the direction of sacred music is entrusted. You, Lord Cardinal, will be good enough to provide a remedy for this also with solicitude, by insisting especially that Gregorian Chant, according to the prescriptions of the Council of Trent and of innumerable other councils, provincial and diocesan in all parts of the world, be studied with particular diligence, and be as a rule preferred in the public and private functions of the institute. It is true that in other times Gregorian Chant was known to most people only through books which were incorrect, vitiated and curtailed. But the accurate and prolonged study that has been given to it by illustrious men who have done a great service to sacred art has changed the face of things. Gregorian

Chant restored in such a satisfactory way to its early purity, as it was handed down by the fathers and is found in the codices of the various churches, is sweet, soft, easy to learn and of a beauty so fresh and full of surprises that wherever it has been introduced it has never failed to excite real enthusiasm in the youthful singers. Now, when delights enters into the fulfillment of duty, everything is done with greater alacrity and with more lasting fruit. It is Our will, therefore, that in all seminaries and colleges in this fostering city there be introduced once more the most ancient Roman chant which used to resound in our churches and basilicas and which formed the delight of past generations in the fairest days of Christian piety. And as in former times the chant was spread abroad over the whole Western Church from Rome, so We desire that Our young clerics, educated under Our own eyes, may carry it with them and diffuse it again in their own dioceses when they return thither as priests to work for the glory of God. We are overjoyed to be able to give these regulations at a time when We are about to celebrate the 15th centenary of the death of the glorious and incomparable Pontiff St. Gregory the Great, to whom an ecclesiastical tradition dating back many centuries has attributed the composition of these sacred melodies and from whom they have derived their name. Let Our dearly-beloved youths exercise themselves in them, for it will be sweet to us to hear them when, as We have been told will be the case, they will assemble at the coming centenary celebrations round the tomb of the Holy Pontiff in the Vatican Basilica during the Sacred Liturgy which, please God, will be celebrated by Us on that auspicious occasion.

Meanwhile as a pledge of Our particular benevolence, receive, Lord Cardinal, the Apostolic Benediction, which from the bottom of Our heart We impart to you, to the clergy, and to all Our most beloved people.

From the Vatican on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of 1903.

**Pius X, Pope**

# Divini Cultus (1928)

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*Though not ground-breaking in its content, Pius XI's Divini Cultus served to strengthen the force and authority given to Tra Le Sollecitudini.*

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Published by Pope Pius XI 20 December 1928

Pius, Servant of the Servants of God, For Everlasting Memory

Since the Church has received from Christ her Founder the office of safeguarding the sanctity of divine worship, it is certainly incumbent upon her, while leaving intact the substance of the Sacrifice and the sacraments, to prescribe ceremonies, rites, formulae, prayers and chant for the proper regulation of that august public ministry, whose special name is "Liturgy", as being the eminently sacred action.

For the Liturgy is indeed a sacred thing, since by it we are raised to God and united to Him, thereby professing our faith and our deep obligation to Him for the benefits we have received and the help of which we stand in constant need. There is thus a close connection between dogma and the sacred Liturgy, and between Christian worship and the sanctification of the faithful. Hence Pope Celestine I saw the standard of faith expressed in the sacred formulae of the Liturgy. "The rule of our faith", he says, "is indicated by the law of our worship. When those who are set over the Christian people fulfill the function committed to them, they plead the cause of the human race in the sight of God's clemency, and pray and supplicate in conjunction with the whole Church".

These public prayers, called at first "the work of God" and later "the divine office" or the daily "debt" which man owes to God, used to be offered both day and night in the presence of a great concourse of the faithful. From the earliest times the simple chants which graced the sacred prayers and the Liturgy gave a wonderful impulse to the piety of the people. History tells us how in the ancient basilicas, where bishop, clergy and people alternately sang the divine praises, the liturgical chant played no small part in converting many barbarians to Christianity and civilization. It was in the churches that heretics came to understand more fully the meaning of the communion of saints; thus the Emperor Valens, an Arian, being present at Mass celebrated by Saint Basil, was overcome by an extraordinary seizure and fainted. At Milan, Saint Ambrose was accused by heretics of attracting the crowds by means of liturgical chants. It was due to these that Saint Augustine made up his mind to become a Christian. It was in the churches, finally, where practically the whole city formed a great joint choir, that the workers, builders, artists, sculptors and writers gained from the Liturgy that deep knowledge of theology which is now so apparent in the monuments of the Middle Ages.

No wonder, then, that the Roman Pontiffs have been so solicitous to safeguard and protect the Liturgy. They have used the same care in making laws for the regulation of the Liturgy, in preserving it from adulteration, as they have in giving accurate expression to the dogmas of the faith. This is the reason why the Fathers made both spoken and written commentary upon the Liturgy or "the law of worship"; for this reason the Council of Trent ordained that the Liturgy should be expounded and explained to the faithful.

In our times too, the chief object of Pope Pius X, in the Motu Proprio [Tra le Sollecitudini] which he issued twenty-five years ago, making certain prescriptions concerning Gregorian Chant and sacred music, was to arouse and foster a Christian spirit in the faithful, by wisely excluding all that might ill befit the sacredness and majesty of our churches. The faithful come to church in order to derive piety from its chief source, by taking an active part in the venerated mysteries and the public solemn prayers of the Church. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that anything that is used to adorn the Liturgy should be controlled by the Church, so that the arts may take their proper place as most noble ministers in sacred worship. Far from resulting in a loss to art, such an arrangement will certainly make for the greater splendor and dignity of the arts that are used in the Church. This has been especially true of sacred music. Wherever the regulations on this subject have been carefully observed, a new life has been given to this delightful art, and the spirit of religion has prospered; the faithful have gained a deeper understanding of the sacred Liturgy, and have taken part with greater zest in the ceremonies of the Mass, in the singing of the psalms and the public prayers. Of this We Ourselves had happy experience when, in the first year of Our Pontificate, We celebrated solemn High Mass in the Vatican Basilica to the noble accompaniment of a choir of clerics of all nationalities, singing in Gregorian Chant.

It is, however, to be deplored that these most wise laws in some places have not been fully observed, and therefore their intended results not obtained. We know that some have declared these laws, though so solemnly promulgated, were not binding upon their obedience. Others obeyed them at first, but have since come gradually to give countenance to a type of music which should be altogether banned from our churches. In some cases, especially when the memory of some famous musician was being celebrated, the opportunity has been taken of performing in church certain works which, however excellent, should never have been performed there, since they were entirely out of keeping with the sacredness of the place and of the Liturgy.

In order to urge the clergy and faithful to a more scrupulous observance of these laws and directions which are to be carefully obeyed by the whole Church, We think it opportune to set down here something of the fruits of Our experience during the last twenty-five years. We celebrate not only the memory of the reform of sacred music to which We have referred, but also the centenary of the monk Guido of Arezzo. Nine hundred years ago Guido, at the bidding of the pope, came to Rome and produced his wonderful invention, whereby the ancient and traditional chants might be more easily published, circulated and preserved intact for posterity — to the great benefit and glory of the Church and of art.

It was in the Lateran Palace that Gregory the Great, having made his famous collection of the traditional treasures of plainsong, editing them with additions of his own, had wisely founded his great Schola in order to perpetuate the true interpretation of the liturgical chant. It was in the same building that the monk Guido gave a demonstration of his marvelous invention before the Roman clergy and the Roman Pontiff himself. The pope, by his approbation and high praise of it, was responsible for the gradual spread of the new system throughout the whole world, and thus for the great advantages that accrued therefrom to musical art in general.

We wish, then, to make certain recommendations to the bishops and ordinaries, whose duty it is, since they are the custodians of the Liturgy, to promote ecclesiastical art. We are thus acceding to the requests which, as a result of many musical congresses and especially that recently held at Rome, have been made to Us by not a few bishops and learned masters in the musical art. To these We accord due

meed of praise; and We ordain that the following directions, as here-under set forth, with the practical methods indicated, be put into effect.

All those who aspire to the priesthood, whether in seminaries or in religious houses, from their earliest years are to be taught Gregorian Chant and sacred music. At that age they are able more easily to learn to sing, and to modify, if not entirely to overcome, any defects in their voices, which in later years would be quite incurable. Instruction in music and singing must be begun in the elementary, and continued in the higher classes. In this way, those who are about to receive sacred orders, having become gradually experienced in chant, will be able during their theological course quite easily to undertake the higher and "aesthetic" study of plainsong and sacred music, of polyphony and the organ, concerning which the clergy certainly ought to have a thorough knowledge.

In seminaries, and in other houses of study for the formation of the clergy both secular and regular there should be a frequent and almost daily lecture or practice — however short — in Gregorian Chant and sacred music. If this is carried out in the spirit of the Liturgy, the students will find it a relief rather than a burden to their minds, after the study of the more exacting subjects. Thus a more complete education of both branches of the clergy in liturgical music will result in the restoration to its former dignity and splendor of the choral Office, a most important part of divine worship; moreover, the scholae and choirs will be invested again with their ancient glory.

Those who are responsible for, and engaged in divine worship in basilicas and cathedrals, in collegiate and conventional churches of religious, should use all their endeavors to see that the choral Office is carried out duly — i.e. in accordance with the prescriptions of the Church. And this, not only as regards the precept of reciting the divine Office "worthily, attentive and devoutly", but also as regards the chant. In singing the psalms attention should be paid to the right tone, with its appropriate mediation and termination, and a suitable pause at the asterisk; so that every verse of the psalms and every strophe of the hymns may be sung by all in perfect time together. If this were rightly observed, then all who worthily sing the psalms would signify their unity of intention in worshipping God and, as one side of the choir sings in answer to the other, would seem to emulate the everlasting praise of the Seraphim who cried one to the other "Holy, Holy, Holy".

Lest anyone in future should invent easy excuses for exempting himself from obedience to the laws of the Church, let every chapter and religious community deal with these matters at meetings held for the purpose; and just as formerly there used to be a "Cantor" or director of the choir, so in future let one be chosen from each chapter or choir of religious, whose duty it will be to see that the rules of the Liturgy and of choral chant are observed and, both individually and generally, to correct the faults of the choir. In this connection it should be observed that, according to the ancient discipline of the Church and the constitutions of chapters still in force, all those at least who are bound to office in choir, are obliged to be familiar with Gregorian Chant. And the Gregorian Chant which is to be used in every church of whatever order, is the text which, revised according to the ancient manuscripts, has been authentically published by the Church from the Vatican Press.

We wish here to recommend, to those whom it may concern, the formation of choirs. These in the course of time came to replace the ancient scholae and were established in the basilicas and greater churches especially for the singing of polyphonic music. Sacred polyphony, We may here remark, is rightly held second only to Gregorian Chant. We are desirous, therefore, that such choirs, as they flourished from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, should now also be created anew and prosper

especially in churches where the scale on which the Liturgy is carried out demands a greater number and a more careful selection of singers.

Choir-schools for boys should be established not only for the greater churches and cathedrals, but also for smaller parish churches. The boys should be taught by the choirmaster to sing properly, so that, in accordance with the ancient custom of the Church, they may sing in the choir with the men, especially as in polyphonic music the highest part, the cantus, ought to be sung by boys. Choir-boys, especially in the sixteenth century, have given us masters of polyphony: first and foremost among them, the great Palestrina.

As We have learned that in some places an attempt is being made to reintroduce a type of music which is not entirely in keeping with the performance of the sacred Office, particularly owing to the excessive use made of musical instruments, We hereby declare that singing with orchestra accompaniment is not regarded by the Church as a more perfect form of music or as more suitable for sacred purposes. Voices, rather than instruments, ought to be heard in the church: the voices of the clergy, the choir and the congregation. Nor should it be deemed that the Church, in preferring the human voice to any musical instrument, is obstructing the progress of music; for no instrument, however perfect, however excellent, can surpass the human voice in expressing human thought, especially when it is used by the mind to offer up prayer and praise to Almighty God.

The traditionally appropriate musical instrument of the Church is the organ, which, by reason of its extraordinary grandeur and majesty, has been considered a worthy adjunct to the Liturgy, whether for accompanying the chant or, when the choir is silent, for playing harmonious music at the prescribed times. But here too must be avoided that mixture of the profane with the sacred which, through the fault partly of organ-builders and partly of certain performers who are partial to the singularities of modern music, may result eventually in diverting this magnificent instrument from the purpose for which it is intended. We wish, within the limits prescribed by the Liturgy, to encourage the development of all that concerns the organ; but We cannot but lament the fact that, as in the case of certain types of music which the Church has rightly forbidden in the past, so now attempts are being made to introduce a profane spirit into the Church by modern forms of music; which forms, if they begin to enter in, the Church would likewise be bound to condemn. Let our churches resound with organ-music that gives expression to the majesty of the edifice and breathes the sacredness of the religious rites; in this way will the art both of those who build the organs and of those who play them flourish afresh and render effective service to the sacred liturgy.

In order that the faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian Chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it. It is most important that when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies, or when pious sodalities take part with the clergy in a procession, they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but, filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the Liturgy, they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed. If this is done, then it will no longer happen that the people either make no answer at all to the public prayers — whether in the language of the Liturgy or in the vernacular — or at best utter the responses in a low and subdued manner.

Let the clergy, both secular and regular, under the lead of their bishops and ordinaries devote their energies either directly, or through other trained teachers, to instructing the people in the Liturgy and in music, as being matters closely associated with Christian doctrine. This will be best effected by teaching

liturgical chant in schools, pious confraternities and similar associations. Religious communities of men and women should devote particular attention to the achievement of this purpose in the various educational institutions committed to their care. Moreover, We are confident that this object will be greatly furthered by those societies which, under the control of ecclesiastical authority, are striving to reform sacred music according to the laws of the Church.

To achieve all that We hope for in this matter numerous trained teachers will be required. And in this connection We accord due praise to all the schools and institutes throughout the Catholic world, which by giving careful instruction in these subjects are forming good and suitable teachers. But We have a special word of commendation for the "Pontifical Higher School of Sacred Music", founded in Rome in the year 1910. This school, which was greatly encouraged by Pope Benedict XV and was by him endowed with new privileges, is most particularly favored by Us; for We regard it as a precious heritage left to Us by two Sovereign Pontiffs, and We therefore wish to recommend it in a special way to all the Bishops.

We are well aware that the fulfillment of these injunctions will entail great trouble and labor. But do we not all know how many artistic works our forefathers, undaunted by difficulties, have handed down to posterity, imbued as they were with pious zeal and with the spirit of the Liturgy? Nor is this to be wondered at; for anything that is the fruit of the interior life of the Church surpasses even the most perfect works of this world. Let the difficulties of this sacred task, far from deterring, rather stimulate and encourage the bishops of the Church, who, by their universal and unfailing obedience to Our behests, will render to the Sovereign Bishop a service most worthy of their episcopal office.

Dated in Rome, 20 December 1928, in the seventh year of our pontificate.

PIUS PP. XI

# Mediator Dei (1947)

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*Pope Pius XII issued this encyclical during the height of the liturgical reform movement, to provide guidelines for the reform of the liturgy.*

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191. As regards music, let the clear and guiding norms of the Apostolic See be scrupulously observed. Gregorian chant, which the Roman Church considers her own as handed down from antiquity and kept under her close tutelage, is proposed to the faithful as belonging to them also. In certain parts of the liturgy the Church definitely prescribes it;[171] it makes the celebration of the sacred mysteries not only more dignified and solemn but helps very much to increase the faith and devotion of the congregation. For this reason, Our predecessors of immortal memory, Pius X and Pius XI, decree - and We are happy to confirm with Our authority the norms laid down by them - that in seminaries and religious institutes, Gregorian chant be diligently and zealously promoted, and moreover that the old Scholae Cantorum be restored, at least in the principal churches. This has already been done with happy results in not a few places.[172]

192. Besides, "so that the faithful take a more active part in divine worship, let Gregorian chant be restored to popular use in the parts proper to the people. Indeed it is very necessary that the faithful attend the sacred ceremonies not as if they were outsiders or mute onlookers, but let them fully appreciate the beauty of the liturgy and take part in the sacred ceremonies, alternating their voices with the priest and the choir, according to the prescribed norms. If, please God, this is done, it will not happen that the congregation hardly ever or only in a low murmur answer the prayers in Latin or in the vernacular."<sup>[173]</sup> A congregation that is devoutly present at the sacrifice, in which our Savior together with His children redeemed with His sacred blood sings the nuptial hymn of His immense love, cannot keep silent, for "song befits the lover"<sup>[174]</sup> and, as the ancient saying has it, "he who sings well prays twice." Thus the Church militant, faithful as well as clergy, joins in the hymns of the Church triumphant and with the choirs of angels, and, all together, sing a wondrous and eternal hymn of praise to the most Holy Trinity in keeping with words of the preface, "with whom our voices, too, thou wouldest bid to be admitted."<sup>[175]</sup>

193. It cannot be said that modern music and singing should be entirely excluded from Catholic worship. For, if they are not profane nor unbecoming to the sacredness of the place and function, and do not spring from a desire of achieving extraordinary and unusual effects, then our churches must admit them since they can contribute in no small way to the splendor of the sacred ceremonies, can lift the mind to higher things and foster true devotion of soul.

194. We also exhort you, Venerable Brethren, to promote with care congregational singing, and to see to its accurate execution with all due dignity, since it easily stirs up and arouses the faith and piety of large gatherings of the faithful. Let the full harmonious singing of our people rise to heaven like the bursting of a thunderous sea<sup>[176]</sup> and let them testify by the melody of their song to the unity of their hearts and minds<sup>[177]</sup>, as becomes brothers and the children of the same Father.

171. Cf. Pius X, Apostolic Letter (Motu Proprio) *Tra le sollecitudini*.

172. Cf. Pius X, loc. cit.; Pius XI, Constitution *Divini cultus*, 2, 5.

173. Pius XI, *Constitution Divini cultus*, 9.
174. Saint Augustine, *Serm. 336*, n. 1.
175. Roman Missal, Preface.
176. Saint Ambrose, *Hexameron*, 3:5, 23.
177. Cf. *Acts*, 4:32.

# Musicae Sacrae Disciplina (1955)

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*As the liturgical reform movement was hitting full stride, Pope Pius XII contributed an encyclical on the subject of liturgical music.*

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The subject of sacred music has always been very close to Our heart. Hence it has seemed appropriate to us in this encyclical letter to give an orderly explanation of the topic and also to answer somewhat more completely several questions which have been raised and discussed during the past decades. We are doing so in order that this noble and distinguished art may contribute more every day to greater splendor in the celebration of divine worship and to the more effective nourishment of spiritual life among the faithful.

2. At the same time We have desired to grant what many of you, venerable brethren, have requested in our wisdom and also what has been asked by outstanding masters of this liberal art and distinguished students of sacred music at meetings devoted to the subject. The experience of pastoral life and the advances being made in the study of this art have persuaded Us that this step is timely.

3. We hope, therefore, that what St. Pius X rightly decreed in the document which he accurately called the "legal code of sacred music[1] may be confirmed and inculcated anew, shown in a new light and strengthened by new proofs. We hope that the noble art of sacred music - adapted to contemporary conditions and in some way enriched - may ever more perfectly accomplish its mission.

4. Music is among the many and great gifts of nature with which God, in Whom is the harmony of the most perfect concord and the most perfect order, has enriched men, whom He has created in His image and likeness.[2] Together with the other liberal arts, music contributes to spiritual joy and the delight of the soul.

5. On this subject St. Augustine has accurately written: "Music, that is the science or the sense of proper modulation, is likewise given by God's generosity to mortals having rational souls in order to lead them to higher things."[3]

6. No one, therefore, will be astonished that always and everywhere, even among pagan peoples, sacred song and the art of music have been used to ornament and decorate religious ceremonies. This is proved by many documents, both ancient and new. No one will be astonished that these arts have been used especially for the worship of the true and sovereign God from the earliest times. Miraculously preserved unharmed from the Red Sea by God's power, the people of God sang a song of victory to the Lord, and Miriam, the sister of Moses, their leader, endowed with prophetic inspiration, sang with the people while playing a tambourine.[4]

7. Later, when the ark of God was taken from the house of Abinadab to the city of David, the king himself and "all Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of wood, on harps and lutes and timbrels and cornets and cymbals."[5] King David himself established the order of the music and singing used for sacred worship.[6] This order was restored after the people's return from exile and was observed faithfully until the Divine Redeemer's coming.

8. St. Paul showed us clearly that sacred chant was used and held in honor from the very beginning in the Church founded by the Divine Redeemer when he wrote to the Ephesians: "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."<sup>[7]</sup> He indicates that this custom of singing hymns was in force in the assemblies of Christians when he says: "When you come together each of you has a hymn."<sup>[8]</sup>

9. Pliny testifies that the same thing held true after apostolic times. He writes that apostates from the Faith said that "this was their greatest fault or error, that they were accustomed to gather before dawn on a certain day and sing a hymn to Christ as if He were God."<sup>[9]</sup> These words of the Roman proconsul in Bithynia show very clearly that the sound of church singing was not completely silenced even in times of persecution.

10. Tertullian confirms this when he says that in the assemblies of the Christians "the Scriptures are read, the psalms are sung, sermons are preached."<sup>[10]</sup>

11. There are many statements of the fathers and ecclesiastical writers testifying that after freedom and peace had been restored to the Church the psalms and hymns of liturgical worship were in almost daily use. Moreover, new forms of sacred chant were gradually created and new types of songs were invented. These were developed more and more by the choir schools attached to cathedrals and other important churches, especially by the School of Singers in Rome.

12. According to tradition, Our predecessor of happy memory, St. Gregory the Great, carefully collected and wisely arranged all that had been handed down by the elders and protected the purity and integrity of sacred chant with fitting laws and regulations.

13. From Rome, the Roman mode of singing gradually spread to other parts of the West. Not only was it enriched by new forms and modes, but a new kind of sacred singing, the religious song, frequently sung in the vernacular, was also brought into use.

14. The choral chant began to be called "Gregorian" after St. Gregory, the man who revived it. It attained new beauty in almost all parts of Christian Europe after the 8th or 9th century because of its accompaniment by a new musical instrument called the "organ." Little by little, beginning in the 9th century, polyphonic singing was added to this choral chant. The study and use of polyphonic singing were developed more and more during the centuries that followed and were raised to a marvelous perfection under the guidance of magnificent composers during the 15th and 16th centuries.

15. Since the Church always held this polyphonic chant in the highest esteem, it willingly admitted this type of music even in the Roman basilicas and in pontifical ceremonies in order to increase the glory of the sacred rites. Its power and splendor were increased when the sounds of the organ and other musical instruments were joined with the voices of the singers.

16. Thus, with the favor and under the auspices of the Church the study of sacred music has gone a long way over the course of the centuries. In this journey, although sometimes slowly and laboriously, it has gradually progressed from the simple and ingenuous Gregorian modes to great and magnificent works of art. To these works not only the human voice, but also the organ and other musical instruments, add dignity, majesty and a prodigious richness.

17. The progress of this musical art clearly shows how sincerely the Church has desired to render divine worship ever more splendid and more pleasing to the Christian people. It likewise shows why the Church must insist that this art remain within its proper limits and must prevent anything profane and foreign to divine worship from entering into sacred music along with genuine progress, and perverting it.

18. The Sovereign Pontiffs have always diligently fulfilled their obligation to be vigilant in this matter. The Council of Trent also forbids "those musical works in which something lascivious or impure is mixed with organ music or singing."<sup>[11]</sup> In addition, not to mention numerous other Sovereign Pontiffs, Our predecessor Benedict XIV of happy memory in an encyclical letter dated February 19, 1749, which prepared for a Holy Year and was outstanding for its great learning and abundance of proofs, particularly urged Bishops to firmly forbid the illicit and immoderate elements which had arrogantly been inserted into sacred music.<sup>[12]</sup>

19. Our predecessors Leo XII, Pius VII, Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII <sup>[13]</sup> followed the same line.

20. Nevertheless it can rightly be said that Our predecessor of immortal memory, St. Pius X, made as it were the highest contribution to the reform and renewal of sacred music when he restated the principles and standards handed down from the elders and wisely brought them together as the conditions of modern times demanded.<sup>[14]</sup> Finally, like Our immediate predecessor of happy memory, Pius XI, in his Apostolic Constitution *Divini cultus sanctitatem (The Holiness of Divine Worship)*, issued December 20, 1929,<sup>[15]</sup> We ourselves in the encyclical *Mediator Dei (On the Sacred Liturgy)*, issued November 20, 1947,<sup>[16]</sup> have enriched and confirmed the orders of the older Pontiffs.

21. Certainly no one will be astonished that the Church is so vigilant and careful about sacred music. It is not a case of drawing up laws of aesthetics or technical rules that apply to the subject of music. It is the intention of the Church, however, to protect sacred music against anything that might lessen its dignity, since it is called upon to take part in something as important as divine worship.

22. On this score sacred music obeys laws and rules which are no different from those prescribed for all religious art and, indeed, for art in general. Now we are aware of the fact that during recent years some artists, gravely offending against Christian piety, have dared to bring into churches works devoid of any religious inspiration and completely at variance with the right rules of art. They try to justify this deplorable conduct by plausible-looking arguments which they claim are based on the nature and character of art itself. They go on to say that artistic inspiration is free and that it is wrong to impose upon it laws and standards extraneous to art, whether they are religious or moral, since such rules seriously hurt the dignity of art and place bonds and shackles on the activity of an inspired artist.

23. Arguments of this kind raise a question which is certainly difficult and serious, and which affects all art and every artist. It is a question which is not to be answered by an appeal to the principles of art or of aesthetics, but which must be decided in terms of the supreme principle of the final end, which is the inviolate and sacred rule for every man and every human act.

24. The ordination and direction of man to his ultimate end - which is God - by absolute and necessary law based on the nature and the infinite perfection of God Himself is so solid that not even God could exempt anyone from it. This eternal and unchangeable law commands that man himself and all his actions should manifest and imitate, so far as possible, God's infinite perfection for the praise and glory of the Creator. Since man is born to attain this supreme end, he ought to conform himself and through

his actions direct all powers of his body and his soul, rightly ordered among themselves and duly subjected to the end they are meant to attain, to the divine Model. Therefore even art and works of art must be judged in the light of their conformity and concord with man's last end.

25. Art certainly must be listed among the noblest manifestations of human genius. Its purpose is to express in human works the infinite divine beauty of which it is, as it were, the reflection. Hence that outworn dictum "art for art's sake" entirely neglects the end for which every creature is made. Some people wrongly assert that art should be exempted entirely from every rule which does not spring from art itself. Thus this dictum either has no worth at all or is gravely offensive to God Himself, the Creator and Ultimate End.

26. Since the freedom of the artist is not a blind instinct to act in accordance with his own whim or some desire for novelty, it is in no way restricted or destroyed, but actually ennobled and perfected, when it is made subject to the divine law.

27. Since this is true of works of art in general, it obviously applies also to religious and sacred art. Actually religious art is even more closely bound to God and the promotion of His praise and glory, because its only purpose is to give the faithful the greatest aid in turning their minds piously to God through the works it directs to their senses of sight and hearing. Consequently the artist who does not profess the truths of the faith or who strays far from God in his attitude or conduct should never turn his hand to religious art. He lacks, as it were, that inward eye with which he might see what God's majesty and His worship demand. Nor can he hope that his works, devoid of religion as they are, will ever really breathe the piety and faith that befit God's temple and His holiness, even though they may show him to be an expert artist who is endowed with visible talent. Thus he cannot hope that his works will be worthy of admission into the sacred buildings of the Church, the guardian and arbiter of religious life.

28. But the artist who is firm in his faith and leads a life worthy of a Christian, who is motivated by the love of God and reverently uses the powers the Creator has given him, expresses and manifests the truths he holds and the piety he possesses so skillfully, beautifully and pleasingly in colors and lines or sounds and harmonies that this sacred labor of art is an act of worship and religion for him. It also effectively arouses and inspires people to profess the faith and cultivate piety.

29. The Church has always honored and always will honor this kind of artist. It opens wide the doors of its temples to them because what these people contribute through their art and industry is a welcome and important help to the Church in carrying out its apostolic ministry more effectively.

30. These laws and standards for religious art apply in a stricter and holier way to sacred music because sacred music enters more intimately into divine worship than many other liberal arts, such as architecture, painting and sculpture. These last serve to prepare a worthy setting for the sacred ceremonies. Sacred music, however, has an important place in the actual performance of the sacred ceremonies and rites themselves. Hence the Church must take the greatest care to prevent whatever might be unbecoming to sacred worship or anything that might distract the faithful in attendance from lifting their minds up to God from entering into sacred music, which is the servant, as it were, of the sacred liturgy.

31. The dignity and lofty purpose of sacred music consist in the fact that its lovely melodies and splendor beautify and embellish the voices of the priest who offers Mass and of the Christian people who praise

the Sovereign God. Its special power and excellence should lift up to God the minds of the faithful who are present. It should make the liturgical prayers of the Christian community more alive and fervent so that everyone can praise and beseech the Triune God more powerfully, more intently and more effectively.

32. The power of sacred music increases the honor given to God by the Church in union with Christ, its Head. Sacred music likewise helps to increase the fruits which the faithful, moved by the sacred harmonies, derive from the holy liturgy. These fruits, as daily experience and many ancient and modern literary sources show, manifest themselves in a life and conduct worthy of a Christian.

33. St. Augustine, speaking of chants characterized by "beautiful voice and most apt melody," says: "I feel that our souls are moved to the ardor of piety by the sacred words more piously and powerfully when these words are sung than when they are not sung, and that all the affections of our soul in their variety have modes of their own in song and chant by which they are stirred up by an indescribable and secret sympathy."<sup>[17]</sup>

34. It is easy to infer from what has just been said that the dignity and force of sacred music are greater the closer sacred music itself approaches to the supreme act of Christian worship, the Eucharistic sacrifice of the altar. There can be nothing more exalted or sublime than its function of accompanying with beautiful sound the voice of the priest offering up the Divine Victim, answering him joyfully with the people who are present and enhancing the whole liturgical ceremony with its noble art.

35. To this highest function of sacred music We must add another which closely resembles it, that is its function of accompanying and beautifying other liturgical ceremonies, particularly the recitation of the Divine Office in choir. Thus the highest honor and praise must be given to liturgical music.

36. We must also hold in honor that music which is not primarily a part of the sacred liturgy, but which by its power and purpose greatly aids religion. This music is therefore rightly called religious music. The Church has possessed such music from the beginning and it has developed happily under the Church's auspices. As experience shows, it can exercise great and salutary force and power on the souls of the faithful, both when it is used in churches during non-liturgical services and ceremonies, or when it is used outside churches at various solemnities and celebrations.

37. The tunes of these hymns, which are often sung in the language of the people, are memorized with almost no effort or labor. The mind grasps the words and the music. They are frequently repeated and completely understood. Hence even boys and girls, learning these sacred hymns at a tender age, are greatly helped by them to know, appreciate and memorize the truths of the faith. Therefore they also serve as a sort of catechism. These religious hymns bring pure and chaste joy to young people and adults during times of recreation. They give a kind of religious grandeur to their more solemn assemblies and gatherings. They bring pious joy, sweet consolation and spiritual progress to Christian families themselves. Hence these popular religious hymns are of great help to the Catholic apostolate and should be carefully cultivated and promoted.

38. Therefore when We praised the manifold power and the apostolic effectiveness of sacred music, We spoke of something that can be a source of great joy and solace to all who have in any way dedicated themselves to its study and practice. All who use the art they possess to compose such musical compositions, to teach them or to perform them by singing or using musical instruments, undoubtedly

exercise in many ways a true and genuine apostolate. They will receive from Christ the Lord the generous rewards and honors of apostles for the work they have done so faithfully.

39. Consequently they should hold their work in high esteem, not only as artists and teachers of art, but also as ministers of Christ the Lord and as His helpers in the work of the apostolate. They should likewise show in their conduct and their lives the dignity of their calling.

40. Since, as We have just shown, the dignity and effectiveness of sacred music and religious chant are so great, it is very necessary that all of their parts should be diligently and carefully arranged to produce their salutary results in a fitting manner.

41. First of all the chants and sacred music which are immediately joined with the Church's liturgical worship should be conducive to the lofty end for which they are intended. This music - as our predecessor Pius X has already wisely warned us - "must possess proper liturgical qualities, primarily holiness and goodness of form; from which its other note, universality, is derived." [18]

42. It must be *holy*. It must not allow within itself anything that savors of the profane nor allow any such thing to slip into the melodies in which it is expressed. The Gregorian chant which has been used in the Church over the course of so many centuries, and which may be called, as it were, its patrimony, is gloriously outstanding for this holiness.

43. This chant, because of the close adaptation of the melody to the sacred text, is not only most intimately conformed to the words, but also in a way interprets their force and efficacy and brings delight to the minds of the hearers. It does this by the use of musical modes that are simple and plain, but which are still composed with such sublime and holy art that they move everyone to sincere admiration and constitute an almost inexhaustible source from which musicians and composers draw new melodies.

44. It is the duty of all those to whom Christ the Lord has entrusted the task of guarding and dispensing the Church's riches to preserve this precious treasure of Gregorian chant diligently and to impart it generously to the Christian people. Hence what Our predecessors, St. Pius X, who is rightly called the renewer of Gregorian chant, [19] and Pius XI [20] have wisely ordained and taught, We also, in view of the outstanding qualities which genuine Gregorian chant possesses, will and prescribe that this be done. In the performance of the sacred liturgical rites this same Gregorian chant should be most widely used and great care should be taken that it should be performed properly, worthily and reverently. And if, because of recently instituted feast days, new Gregorian melodies must be composed, this should be done by true masters of the art. It should be done in such a way that these new compositions obey the laws proper to genuine Gregorian chant and are in worthy harmony with the older melodies in their virtue and purity.

45. If these prescriptions are really observed in their entirety, the requirements of the other property of sacred music - that property by virtue of which it should be an *example of true art* - will be duly satisfied. And if in Catholic churches throughout the entire world Gregorian chant sounds forth without corruption or diminution, the chant itself, like the sacred Roman liturgy, will have a characteristic of universality, so that the faithful, wherever they may be, will hear music that is familiar to them and a part of their own home. In this way they may experience, with much spiritual consolation, the wonderful

unity of the Church. This is one of the most important reasons why the Church so greatly desires that the Gregorian chant traditionally associated with the Latin words of the sacred liturgy be used.

46. We are not unaware that, for serious reasons, some quite definite exceptions have been conceded by the Apostolic See. We do not want these exceptions extended or propagated more widely, nor do We wish to have them transferred to other places without due permission of the Holy See. Furthermore, even where it is licit to use these exemptions, local Ordinaries and the other pastors should take great care that the faithful from their earliest years should learn at least the easier and more frequently used Gregorian melodies, and should know how to employ them in the sacred liturgical rites, so that in this way also the unity and the universality of the Church may shine forth more powerfully every day.

47. Where, according to old or immemorial custom, some popular hymns are sung in the language of the people after the sacred words of the liturgy have been sung in Latin during the solemn Eucharistic sacrifice, local Ordinaries can allow this to be done "if, in the light of the circumstances of the locality and the people, they believe that (custom) cannot prudently be removed."<sup>[21]</sup> The law by which it is forbidden to sing the liturgical words themselves in the language of the people remains in force, according to what has been said.

48. In order that singers and the Christian people may rightly understand the meaning of the liturgical words joined to the musical melodies, it has pleased Us to make Our own the exhortation made by the Fathers of the Council of Trent. "Pastors and all those who have care of souls," were especially urged that "often, during the celebration of Mass, they or others whom they delegate explain something about what is read in the Mass and, among other things, tell something about the mystery of this most holy sacrifice. This is to be done particularly on Sundays and holy days."<sup>[22]</sup>

49. This should be done especially at the time when catechetical instruction is being given to the Christian people. This may be done more easily and readily in this age of ours than was possible in times past, because translations of the liturgical texts into the vernacular tongues and explanations of these texts in books and pamphlets are available. These works, produced in almost every country by learned writers, can effectively help and enlighten the faithful to understand and share in what is said by the sacred ministers in the Latin language.

50. It is quite obvious that what We have said briefly here about Gregorian chant applies mainly to the Latin Roman Rite of the Church. It can also, however, be applied to a certain extent to the liturgical chants of other rites - either to those of the West, such as the Ambrosian, Gallican or Mozarabic, or to the various eastern rites.

51. For as all of these display in their liturgical ceremonies and formulas of prayer the marvelous abundance of the Church, they also, in their various liturgical chants, preserve treasures which must be guarded and defended to prevent not only their complete disappearance, but also any partial loss or distortion.

52. Among the oldest and most outstanding monuments of sacred music the liturgical chants of the different eastern rites hold a highly important place. Some of the melodies of these chants, modified in accordance with the character of the Latin liturgy, had a great influence on the composition of the musical works of the Western Church itself. It is Our hope that the selection of sacred eastern rite hymns - which the Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, with the help of the Pontifical Institute of

Sacred Music, is busily working to complete - will achieve good doctrinal and practical results. Thus eastern rite seminarians, well trained in sacred chant, can make a significant contribution to enhancing the beauty of God's house after they have been ordained priests.

53. It is not Our intention in what We have just said in praise and commendation of the Gregorian chant to exclude sacred polyphonic music from the rites of the Church. If this polyphonic music is endowed with the proper qualities, it can be of great help in increasing the magnificence of divine worship and of moving the faithful to religious dispositions. Everyone certainly knows that many polyphonic compositions, especially those that date from the 16th century, have an artistic purity and richness of melody which render them completely worthy of accompanying and beautifying the Church's sacred rites.

54. Although over the course of the centuries genuine polyphonic art gradually declined and profane melodies often crept into it, during recent decades the indefatigable labors of experts have brought about a restoration. The works of the old composers have been carefully studied and proposed as models to be imitated and rivaled by modern composers.

55. So it is that in the basilicas, cathedrals and churches of religious communities these magnificent works of the old masters and the polyphonic compositions of more recent musicians can be performed, contributing greatly to the beauty of the sacred rite. Likewise We know that simpler but genuinely artistic polyphonic compositions are often sung even in smaller churches.

56. The Church favors all these enterprises. As Our predecessor of immortal memory, St. Pius X, says, the Church "unceasingly encourages and favors the progress of the arts, admitting for religious use all the good and the beautiful that the mind of man has discovered over the course of the centuries, but always respecting the liturgical laws." [23]

57. These laws warn that great prudence and care should be used in this serious matter in order to keep out of churches polyphonic music which, because of its heavy and bombastic style, might obscure the sacred words of the liturgy by a kind of exaggeration, interfere with the conduct of the liturgical service or, finally, lower the skill and competence of the singers to the disadvantage of sacred worship.

58. These norms must be applied to the use of the organ or other musical instruments. Among the musical instruments that have a place in church the organ rightly holds the principal position, since it is especially fitted for the sacred chants and sacred rites. It adds a wonderful splendor and a special magnificence to the ceremonies of the Church. It moves the souls of the faithful by the grandeur and sweetness of its tones. It gives minds an almost heavenly joy and it lifts them up powerfully to God and to higher things.

59. Besides the organ, other instruments can be called upon to give great help in attaining the lofty purpose of sacred music, so long as they play nothing profane nothing clamorous or strident and nothing at variance with the sacred services or the dignity of the place. Among these the violin and other musical instruments that use the bow are outstanding because, when they are played by themselves or with other stringed instruments or with the organ, they express the joyous and sad sentiments of the soul with an indescribable power. Moreover, in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, We Ourselves gave detailed and clear regulations concerning the musical modes that are to be admitted into the worship of the Catholic religion.

60. "For, if they are not profane or unbecoming to the sacredness of the place and function and do not spring from a desire to achieve extraordinary and unusual effects, then our churches must admit them, since they can contribute in no small way to the splendor of the sacred ceremonies, can lift the mind to higher things, and can foster true devotion of the soul."<sup>[24]</sup>

61. It should hardly be necessary to add the warning that, when the means and talent available are unequal to the task, it is better to forego such attempts than to do something which would be unworthy of divine worship and sacred gatherings.

62. As We have said before, besides those things that are intimately associated with the Church's sacred liturgy, there are also popular religious hymns which derive their origin from the liturgical chant itself. Most of these are written in the language of the people. Since these are closely related to the mentality and temperament of individual national groups, they differ considerably among themselves according to the character of different races and localities.

63. If hymns of this sort are to bring spiritual fruit and advantage to the Christian people, they must be in full conformity with the doctrine of the Catholic faith. They must also express and explain that doctrine accurately. Likewise they must use plain language and simple melody and must be free from violent and vain excess of words. Despite the fact that they are short and easy, they should manifest a religious dignity and seriousness. When they are fashioned in this way these sacred canticles, born as they are from the most profound depths of the people's soul, deeply move the emotions and spirit and stir up pious sentiments. When they are sung at religious rites by a great crowd of people singing as with one voice, they are powerful in raising the minds of the faithful to higher things.

64. As we have written above, such hymns cannot be used in Solemn High Masses without the express permission of the Holy See. Nevertheless at Masses that are not sung solemnly these hymns can be a powerful aid in keeping the faithful from attending the Holy Sacrifice like dumb and idle spectators. They can help to make the faithful accompany the sacred services both mentally and vocally and to join their own piety to the prayers of the priest. This happens when these hymns are properly adapted to the individual parts of the Mass, as We rejoice to know is being done in many parts of the Catholic world.

65. In rites that are not completely liturgical religious hymns of this kind - when, as We have said, they are endowed with the right qualities - can be of great help in the salutary work of attracting the Christian people and enlightening them, in imbuing them with sincere piety and filling them with holy joy. They can produce these effects not only within churches, but outside of them also, especially on the occasion of pious processions and pilgrimages to shrines and at the time of national or international congresses. They can be especially useful, as experience has shown, in the work of instructing boys and girls in Catholic truth, in societies for youth and in meetings of pious associations.

66. Hence We can do no less than urge you, venerable brethren, to foster and promote diligently popular religious singing of this kind in the dioceses entrusted to you. There is among you no lack of experts in this field to gather hymns of this sort into one collection, where this has not already been done, so that all of the faithful can learn them more easily, memorize them and sing them correctly.

67. Those in charge of the religious instruction of boys and girls should not neglect the proper use of these effective aids. Those in charge of Catholic youth should make prudent use of them in the highly important work entrusted to them. Thus there will be hope of happily attaining what everyone desires,

namely the disappearance of worldly songs which because of the quality of their melodies or the frequently voluptuous and lascivious words that go with them are a danger to Christians, especially the young, and their replacement by songs that give chaste and pure pleasure, that foster and increase faith and piety.

68. May it thus come about that the Christian people begin even on this earth to sing that song of praise it will sing forever in heaven: "To Him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." [25]

69. What we have written thus far applies primarily to those nations where the Catholic religion is already firmly established. In mission lands it will not be possible to accomplish all these things until the number of Christians has grown sufficiently, larger church buildings have been erected, the children of Christians properly attend schools established by the Church and, finally, until there is an adequate number of sacred ministers. Still We urgently exhort apostolic workers who are laboring strenuously in these extensive parts of the Lord's vineyard to pay careful attention to this matter as one of the serious problems of their ministry.

70. Many of the peoples entrusted to the ministry of the missionaries take great delight in music and beautify the ceremonies dedicated to the worship of idols with religious singing. It is not prudent, then, for the heralds of Christ, the true God, to minimize or neglect entirely this effective help in their apostolate. Hence the preachers of the Gospel in pagan lands should sedulously and willingly promote in the course of their apostolic ministry the love for religious song which is cherished by the men entrusted to their care. In this way these people can have, in contrast to their own religious music which is frequently admired even in cultivated countries, sacred Christian hymns in which the truths of the faith, the life of Christ the Lord and the praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints can be sung in a language and in melodies familiar to them.

71. Missionaries should likewise be mindful of the fact that, from the beginning, when the Catholic Church sent preachers of the Gospel into lands not yet illuminated by the light of faith, it took care to bring into those countries, along with the sacred liturgical rites, musical compositions, among which were the Gregorian melodies. It did this so that the people who were to be converted might be more easily led to accept the truths of the Christian religion by the attractiveness of these melodies.

72. So that the desired effect may be produced by what We have recommended and ordered in this encyclical, following in the footsteps of Our predecessors, you, venerable brethren, must carefully use all the aids offered by the lofty function entrusted to you by Christ the Lord and committed to you by the Church. As experience teaches, these aids are employed to great advantage in many churches throughout the Christian world.

73. First of all see to it that there is a good school of singers in the cathedral itself and, as far as possible, in other major churches of your dioceses. This school should serve as an example to others and influence them to carefully develop and perfect sacred chant.

74. Where it is impossible to have schools of singers or where there are not enough choir boys, it is allowed that "a group of men and women or girls, located in a place outside the sanctuary set apart for the exclusive use of this group, can sing the liturgical texts at Solemn Mass, as long as the men are

completely separated from the women and girls and everything unbecoming is avoided. The Ordinary is bound in conscience in this matter."<sup>[26]</sup>

75. Great care must be taken that those who are preparing for the reception of sacred orders in your seminaries and in missionary or religious houses of study are properly instructed in the doctrine and use of sacred music and Gregorian chant according to the mind of the Church by teachers who are experts in this field, who esteem the traditional customs and teachings and who are entirely obedient to the precepts and norms of the Holy See.

76. If, among the students in the seminary or religious house of study, anyone shows remarkable facility in or liking for this art, the authorities of the seminary or house of study should not neglect to inform you about it. Then you may avail yourself of the opportunity to cultivate these gifts further and send him either to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome or to some other institution of learning in which this subject is taught, provided that the student manifests the qualities and virtues upon which one can base a hope that he will become an excellent priest.

77. In this matter care must also be taken that local Ordinaries and heads of religious communities have someone whose help they can use in this important area which, weighed down as they are by so many occupations, they cannot easily take care of themselves.

78. It would certainly be best if in diocesan Councils of Christian Art there were someone especially expert in the fields of religious music and chant who could carefully watch over what is being done in the diocese, inform the Ordinary about what has been done and what is going to be done, receive the Ordinary's commands and see that they are obeyed. If in any diocese there is one of these associations, which have been wisely instituted to foster sacred music and have been greatly praised and commended by the Sovereign Pontiffs, the Ordinary in his prudence may employ this association in the task of fulfilling responsibility.

79. Pious associations of this kind, which have been founded to instruct the people in sacred music or for advanced study in this subject, can contribute greatly by words and example to the advance of sacred music.

80. Help and promote such associations, venerable brethren, so that they may lead an active life, may employ the best and the most effective teachers, and so that, throughout the entire diocese, they may diligently promote the knowledge, love and use of sacred music and religious harmonies, with due observance of the Church's laws and due obedience to Ourselves.

81. Moved by paternal solicitude, We have dealt with this matter at some length. We are entirely confident that you, venerable brethren, will diligently apply all of your pastoral solicitude to this sacred subject which contributes so much to the more worthy and magnificent conduct of divine worship.

82. It is Our hope that whoever in the Church supervises and directs the work of sacred music under your leadership may be influenced by Our encyclical letter to carry on this glorious apostolate with new ardor and new effort, generously, enthusiastically and strenuously.

83. Hence, We hope that this most noble art, which has been so greatly esteemed throughout the Church's history and which today has been brought to real heights of holiness and beauty, will be developed and continually perfected and that on its own account it will happily work to bring the

children of the Church to give due praise, expressed in worthy melodies and sweet harmonies, to the Triune God with stronger faith, more flourishing hope and more ardent charity.

84. May it produce even outside the walls of churches - in Christian families and gatherings of Christians - what St. Cyprian beautifully spoke of to Donatus, "Let the sober banquet resound with Psalms. And if your memory by good and your voice pleasant, approach this work according to custom. You give more nourishment to those dearest to you if we hear spiritual things and if religious sweetness delights the ears."<sup>[27]</sup>

85. In the meantime, buoyed up by the hope of richer and more joyous fruits which We are confident will come from this exhortation of Ours, as a testimony of Our good will and as an omen of heavenly gifts to each one of you, venerable brethren, to the flock entrusted to your care and to those who observe Our wishes and work to promote sacred music, with abundant charity, We impart the Apostolic Benediction.

*Given at St. Peter's in Rome, December 25, on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the year 1955, the 17th of Our Pontificate.*

## **PIUS XII**

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1. Motu proprio, *Fra le sollecitudini*, Acta Pii X, I, 77.
2. Cf. *Gen.* 1. 26.
3. *Epis.* 161. *De origine animae hominis*, 1, 2; PL XXXIII, 725.
4. Cf. *Ex.* 15. 1-20.
5. *II Sam.* 6. 5.
6. Cf. *I Para.* 23. 5; 25. 2-31.
7. *Eph.* 5. 18ff; cf. *Col.* 3. 16.
8. *I Cor.* 14. 26.
9. Pliny, *Epis.* X, 96-97.
10. Tertullian, *De anima*, ch. 9; PL II, 701; and *Apol.* 39; PL I, 540.
11. Council of Trent, Session XXII: *Decretum de observandis et evitandis in celebratione Missae*.
12. Cf. encyclical letter of Benedict XIV *Annus qui*, Opera omnia (Prati edition, vol. 17, 1, page 16).
13. Cf. apostolic letter *Bonum est confiteri Domino*, August 2, 1828; Cf. *Bullarium Romanum*, Prati edition, ex Typ. Aldina, IX, 139ff.
14. Cf. *Acta Pii X*, I 75-87; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, XXXVI (1903-1904) 329-39, 387-95.
15. Cf. AAS., XXI, 33ff.
16. Cf. AAS., XXXIX, 521-95.

17. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book X, chap. 33, MPL, XXXII, 799ff.
18. *Acta Pii X*, loc. cit., 78.
19. Letter to Card. Respighi, *Acta Pii X*, loc. cit. 68-74, see 73ff.; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, XXXVI (1903-04), 325-29, 395-98, see 398.
20. Pius XI, apostolic constitution. *Divini cultus*, AAS, XXI (1929), 33ff.
21. *Code of Canon Law*, Can. 5.
22. Council of Trent, Session XXII, *De Sacrificio Missae*, C. VIII.
23. *Acta Pii X*, loc. cit., 80.
24. AAS, XXXIX (1947), 590.
25. *Apoc.* 5. 13.
26. Decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, No's. 3964, 4201, 4231.
27. St. Cyprian, *Letter to Donatus* (Letter 1, n. 16) PL, IV, 227.

# De Musica Sacra (1958)

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*Responding to Pope Pius XII's Encyclical Musicae Sacrae Disciplina, the Sacred Congregation of Rites promulgated an instruction giving specifics for implementation.*

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## Introduction

In our time the Supreme Pontiffs have issued three important documents on the subject of sacred music: the *Motu proprio Inter sollicitudines* of St. Pius X, Nov. 22, 1903; the Apostolic constitution *Divini cultus* of Pius XI of happy memory, Dec. 20, 1928; and the encyclical *Musicæ sacræ disciplina* of the happily reigning Supreme Pontiff Pius XII, Dec. 25, 1955. Other papal documents have also been issued, along with decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in regard to sacred music.

As everyone realizes, sacred music and sacred liturgy are so naturally inter-woven that laws cannot be made for the one without affecting the other. Indeed in the papal documents, and the decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites we find materials common to both sacred music, and sacred liturgy.

Before his encyclical on sacred music, the Supreme Pontiff, Pius XII, issued another encyclical on the sacred liturgy, *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947), which very clearly explains, and demonstrates the relation between liturgical doctrine, and pastoral needs. It has therefore been considered appropriate to put together from the above documents a special instruction containing all the main points on sacred liturgy, sacred music, and the pastoral advantages of both. In this way their directives may be more easily, and securely put into practice.

It is for this purpose that the present instruction has been prepared. Experts in sacred music, and the Pontifical Commission for the General Restoration of the Liturgy have given advice and assistance.

The organization of this instruction is as follows:

Chapter I: General Concepts (no. 1-10).

Chapter II: General Norms (no. 11-21).

Chapter III: Special Norms.

1. Principal liturgical functions in which sacred music is used.

A. Mass.

- a. General principles regarding the participation of the faithful (no. 22-23).
- b. Participation of the faithful in sung Mass (no. 24-27).
- c. Participation of the faithful in low Mass (no. 28-34).
- d. Conventual Mass, or the Mass in choir (no. 35-37).
- e. Assistance of priests in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and so-called "synchronized" Masses (no. 38-39).

B. Divine Office (no. 40-46).

C. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament (no. 47).

2. Kinds of sacred music.

A. Sacred polyphony (no. 48-49).

B. Modern sacred music (no. 50).

- C. Hymns (no. 51-53).
- D. Religious music (no. 54-55).
- 3. Books of liturgical chant (no. 56-59).
- 4. Musical instruments and bells.
  - A. General principles (no. 60).
  - B. Classic organ, and similar instruments (no. 61-67).
  - C. Sacred instrumental music (no. 68-69).
  - D. Musical instruments, and mechanical devices (no. 70-73).
  - E. Broadcasting, and television of sacred functions (no. 74-79).
  - F. Times when the playing of musical instruments is forbidden (no. 80-85).
  - G. Bells (no. 86-92).
- 5. Persons having principal functions in sacred music and the sacred liturgy (no. 93-103).
- 6. Duty to cultivate sacred music and sacred liturgy.
  - A. Training of the clergy, and people (no. 104-112).
  - B. Public, and private schools of sacred music (no. 113-118).

Chapter I explains a few general concepts; chapter II then takes up the general norms for the use of sacred music in the liturgy. With this background chapter III presents the entire subject of sacred music, and sacred liturgy in detail. Each section establishes its own general principles, and then applies them to particular cases.

## Chapter I: General Concepts

1. "The sacred liturgy comprises the entire public worship of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, Head and members" (*Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947: AAS 39 [1947] 528-529). "Liturgical ceremonies" are sacred rites instituted by Jesus Christ or the Church; they are carried out by persons lawfully appointed, and according to the prescriptions of liturgical books approved by the Holy See; their purpose is to give due worship to God, the Saints, and the Blessed (cf. canon 1256). Any other services, whether performed inside or outside the church, are called "private devotions", even though a priest is present or conducts them.
2. The holy sacrifice of the Mass is an act of worship offered to God in the name of Christ and the Church; of its nature, it is public, regardless of the place or manner of its celebration. Thus, the term "private Mass" should never be used.
3. There are two kinds of Masses: the sung Mass ("Missa in cantu"), and the read Mass ("Missa lecta"), commonly called low Mass.

There are two kinds of sung Mass: one called a solemn Mass if it is celebrated with the assistance of other ministers, a deacon and a sub-deacon; the other called a high Mass if there is only the priest celebrant who sings all the parts proper to the sacred ministers.

4. "Sacred music" includes the following: a) Gregorian chant; b) sacred polyphony; c) modern sacred music; d) sacred organ music; e) hymns; and f) religious music.

5. Gregorian chant, which is used in liturgical ceremonies, is the sacred music proper to the Roman Church; it is to be found in the liturgical books approved by the Holy See. This music has been reverently, and faithfully fostered, and developed from most ancient, and venerable traditions; and even in recent times new chants have been composed in the style of this tradition. This style of music has no need of organ or other instrumental accompaniment.

6. Sacred polyphony is measured music which arose from the tradition of Gregorian chant. It is choral music written in many voice-parts, and sung without instrumental accompaniment. It began to flourish in the Latin Church in the Middle Ages, and reached its height in the art of Giovanni Pierluigi Palestrina (1524-1594) in the latter half of the sixteenth century; distinguished musicians of our time still cultivate this art.

7. Modern sacred music is likewise sung in many voice-parts, but at times with instrumental accompaniment. Its composition is of more recent date, and in a more advanced style, developed from the previous centuries. When this music is composed specifically for liturgical use it must be animated by a spirit of devotion, and piety; only on this condition can it be admitted as suitable accompaniment for these services.

8. Sacred music for organ is music composed for the organ alone. Ever since the pipe organ came into use this music has been widely cultivated by famous masters of the art. If such music complies with the laws for sacred music, it is an important contribution to the beauty of the sacred liturgy.

9. Hymns are songs which spontaneously arise from the religious impulses with which mankind has been endowed by its Creator. Thus they are universally sung among all peoples.

This music had a fine effect on the lives of the faithful, imbuing both their private, and social lives with a true Christian spirit (cf. Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16). It was encouraged from the earliest times, and in our day it is still to be recommended for fostering the piety of the faithful, and enhancing their private devotions. Even such music can, at times, be admitted to liturgical ceremonies (This music had a fine effect on the lives of the faithful, imbuing both their private, and social lives with a true Christian spirit (cf. Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16). It was encouraged from the earliest times, and in our day it is still to be recommended for fostering the piety of the faithful, and enhancing their private devotions. Even such music can, at times, be admitted to liturgical ceremonies (*Musicæ sacræ disciplina*, Dec. 25, 1955; AAS 48 [1956] 13-14),, Dec. 25, 1955; AAS 48 [1956] 13-14).

10. Religious music is any music which, either by the intention of the composer or by the subject or purpose of the composition, serves to arouse devotion, and religious sentiments. Such music "is an effective aid to religion" (*Musicæ sacræ disciplina*, idem.). But since it was not intended for divine worship, and was composed in a free style, it is not to be used during liturgical ceremonies.

## Chapter II: General Norms

11. This instruction is binding on all rites of the Latin Church. Thus, what is said of Gregorian chant applies to all the chants which are used in other Latin rites.

Sacred music is to be taken generally in this instruction as embracing both vocal and instrumental music. But at times it will be limited to instrumental music only, as will be clear from the context.

A church ordinarily means any sacred place; this includes a church in the strict sense, as well as public, semipublic, and private oratories; again the context itself may restrict the meaning to a church in the strict sense.

12. Liturgical ceremonies are to be carried out as indicated in the liturgical books approved by the Holy See; this applies to the universal Church, to particular churches, and to religious communities (cf. canon 1257). Private devotions, however, may be conducted according to local or community customs if they have been approved by competent ecclesiastical authority (cf. canon 1259).

Liturgical ceremonies, and private devotions are not to be mixed; but if the situation allows, such devotions may either precede or follow a liturgical ceremony.

13. a) Latin is the language of liturgical ceremonies; however, the liturgical books mentioned above, if they have been approved for general use or for a particular place or community, may make use of another language for certain liturgical ceremonies, and in such cases, this will be explicitly stated. Any exceptions to the general rule of Latin will be mentioned later in this Instruction.

b) Special permission is needed for the use of the vernacular which is a word-for-word translation in the celebration of sung liturgical ceremonies (*Motu proprio Inter sollicitudines* AAS 36 [1903-1904] 334; *Decr. auth. S.R.C.* 4121).

c) Individual exceptions to the exclusive use of Latin in liturgical ceremonies which have already been granted by the Holy See still remain in effect. These permissions are not to be modified in their meaning nor extended to other regions without authorization from the Holy See.

d) In private devotions any language more suited to the faithful may be used.

14. a) In sung Masses only Latin is to be used. This applies not only to the celebrant, and his ministers, but also to the choir or congregation.

"However, popular vernacular hymns may be sung at the solemn Eucharistic Sacrifice (sung Masses), after the liturgical texts have been sung in Latin, in those places where such a centenary or immemorial custom has obtained. Local ordinaries may permit the continuation of this custom 'if they judge that it cannot prudently be discontinued because of the circumstances of the locality or the people' (cf. canon 5)" (*Musicæ sacræ disciplina*: AAS 48 [1956] 16-17).

b) At low Mass the faithful who participate directly in the liturgical ceremonies with the celebrant by reciting aloud the parts of the Mass which belong to them must, along with the priest and his server, use Latin exclusively.

But if, in addition to this direct participation in the liturgy, the faithful wish to add some prayers or popular hymns, according to local custom, these may be recited or sung in the vernacular.

c) It is strictly forbidden for the faithful in unison or for a commentator to recite aloud with the priest the parts of the Proper, Ordinary, and canon of the Mass. This prohibition extends to both Latin, and a vernacular word-for-word translation. Exceptions will be enumerated in paragraph 31.

However, it is desirable that a lector read the Epistle and Gospel in the vernacular for the benefit of the faithful at low Masses on Sundays and feast days.

Between the Consecration, and the *Pater noster* a holy silence is fitting.

## Sacred Processions

15. In sacred processions conducted according to the liturgical books, only the language prescribed or permitted by these books should be used. In other processions, held as private devotions, the language more suited to the faithful may be used.

16. Gregorian chant is the music characteristic of the Roman Church. Therefore, its use is not only permitted, but encouraged at all liturgical ceremonies above all other styles of music, unless circumstances demand otherwise. From this it follows that:

a) The language of Gregorian chant, because of its character as liturgical music, must be exclusively Latin.

b) The priest and his ministers must use only the Gregorian melodies given in the standard editions when they sing their parts according to the rubrics of the liturgical ceremonies. Any sort of instrumental accompaniment is forbidden.

This is binding also on choir, and congregation when they answer the chants of the priest or his ministers according to the rubrics.

c) Finally, if a particular indult has been granted for the priest, deacon, subdeacon, or lector to read solemnly the Epistle, Lesson, or Gospel in the vernacular after they have been chanted in their Gregorian melodies, they must be read in a loud and clear voice, without any attempt to imitate the Gregorian melodies (cf. no. 96e).

17. When the choir is capable of singing it, sacred polyphony may be used in all liturgical ceremonies. This type of sacred music is specially appropriate for ceremonies celebrated with greater splendor, and solemnity.

18. Modern sacred music may also be used in all liturgical ceremonies if it conforms to the dignity, solemnity, and sacredness of the service, and if there is a choir capable of rendering it artistically.

19. Hymns may be freely used in private devotions. But in liturgical ceremonies the principles laid down in paragraphs 13-15 should be strictly observed.

20. Religious music should be entirely excluded from all liturgical functions; however, such music may be used in private devotions. With regard to concerts in church, the principles stated below in paragraphs 54, and 55 are to be observed.

## The Sacred Text

21. Everything which the liturgical books prescribe to be sung, either by the priest and his ministers, or by the choir or congregation, forms an integral part of the sacred liturgy. Therefore:

a) It is strictly forbidden to change in any way the sung text, to alter or omit words, or to introduce inappropriate repetitions. This applies also to compositions of sacred polyphony, and modern sacred music: each word should be clearly, and distinctly audible.

- b) It is explicitly forbidden to omit either the whole or a part of any liturgical text unless the rubrics provide for such a change.
- c) But if for some reason a choir cannot sing one or another liturgical text according to the music printed in the liturgical books, the only permissible substitution is this: that it be sung either *recto tono*, i.e., on a straight tone, or set to one of the psalm tones. Organ accompaniment may be used. Typical reasons for permitting such a change are an insufficient number of singers, or their lack of musical training, or even, at times, the length of a particular rite or chant.

## Chapter III-1. Principal liturgical functions in which sacred music is used.

### A. Mass

#### *a. General principles regarding the participation of the faithful:*

22. By its very nature, the Mass requires that all present take part in it, each having a particular function.

a) Interior participation is the most important; this consists in paying devout attention, and in lifting up the heart to God in prayer. In this way the faithful "are intimately joined with their High Priest...and together with Him, and through Him offer (the Sacrifice), making themselves one with Him" (*Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947: AAS 39 [1947] 552).

b) The participation of the congregation becomes more complete, however, when, in addition to this interior disposition, exterior participation is manifested by external acts, such as bodily position (kneeling, standing, sitting), ceremonial signs, and especially responses, prayers, and singing.

The Supreme Pontiff Pius XII, in his encyclical on the sacred liturgy, *Mediator Dei*, recommended this form of participation:

"Those who are working for the exterior participation of the congregation in the sacred ceremonies are to be warmly commended. This can be accomplished in more than one way. The congregation may answer the words of the priest, as prescribed by the rubrics, or sing hymns appropriate to the different parts of the Mass, or do both. Also, at solemn ceremonies, they may alternate in singing the liturgical chant (AAS 39 [1947] 560)".

When the papal documents treat of "active participation" they are speaking of this general participation (*Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 [1947] 530-537), of which the outstanding example is the priest, and his ministers who serve at the altar with the proper interior dispositions, and carefully observe the rubrics, and ceremonies.

c) Active participation is perfect when "sacramental" participation is included. In this way "the people receive the Holy Eucharist not only by spiritual desire, but also sacramentally, and thus obtain greater benefit from this most holy Sacrifice". (Council of Trent, Sess. 22, ch. 6; cf. also *Mediator Dei*: AAS 39 [1947] 565: "It is most appropriate, as the liturgy itself prescribes, for the people to come to holy Communion after the priest has received at the altar".)

d) Since adequate instruction is necessary before the faithful can intelligently, and actively participate in the mass, it will help to note here a very wise law enacted by the Council of Trent: "This holy Council orders that pastors, and all those who are entrusted with the care of souls shall frequently give a commentary on one of the texts used at Mass, either personally or through others, and, in addition, explain some aspect of the mystery of this holy Sacrifice; this should be done especially on Sundays, and feast days in the sermon which follows the Gospel (or "when the people are being instructed in the catechism)" (Council of Trent, Sess. 22, ch. 8; *Musicæ sacræ disciplina*: AAS 48 [1956] 17).

### **More Perfect Worship**

23. The primary end of general participation is the more perfect worship of God, and the edification of the faithful. Thus the various means of congregational participation should be so controlled that there is no danger of abuse, and this end is effectively achieved.

#### *b. Participation of the faithful in sung Mass.*

24. The more noble form of the Eucharistic celebration is the solemn Mass because in it the solemnities of ceremonies, ministers, and sacred music all combine to express the magnificence of the divine mysteries, and to impress upon the minds of the faithful the devotion with which they should contemplate them. Therefore, we must strive that the faithful have the respect due to this form of worship by properly participating in it in the ways described below.

25. In solemn Mass there are three degrees of the participation of the faithful:

a) First, the congregation can sing the liturgical responses. These are: *Amen*; *Et cum spiritu tuo*; *Gloria tibi, Domine*; *Habemus ad Dominum*; *Dignum et justum est*; *Sed libera nos a malo*; *Deo gratias*. Every effort must be made that the faithful of the entire world learn to sing these responses.

b) Secondly, the congregation can sing the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass: *Kyrie, eleison*; *Gloria in excelsis Deo*; *Credo*; *Sanctus-Benedictus*; *Agnus Dei*. Every effort must be made that the faithful learn to sing these parts, particularly according to the simpler Gregorian melodies. But if they are unable to sing all these parts, there is no reason why they cannot sing the easier ones: *Kyrie, eleison*; *Sanctus-Benedictus*; *Agnus Dei*; the choir, then, can sing the *Gloria*, and *Credo*.

### **Recommended Chants**

In connection with this, the following Gregorian melodies, because of their simplicity, should be learned by the faithful throughout the world: the *Kyrie, eleison*; *Sanctus-Benedictus*; *Agnus Dei* of Mass XVI from the Roman Gradual; the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, and *Ite, missa est-Deo gratias* of Mass XV; and either *Credo I* or *Credo III*. In this way it will be possible to achieve that most highly desirable goal of having the Christian faithful throughout the world manifest their common faith by active participation in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and by common and joyful song (*Musicæ sacræ disciplina*: AAS 48 [1956] 16).

c) Thirdly, if those present are well trained in Gregorian chant, they can sing the parts of the Proper of the Mass. This form of participation should be carried out particularly in religious congregations and seminaries.

26. High Mass, too, has its special place, even though it lacks the sacred ministers, and the full magnificence of the ceremonies of solemn Mass, for it is nonetheless enriched with the beauty of chant, and sacred music.

It is desirable that on Sundays, and feast days the parish or principal Mass be a sung Mass.

What has been said above in paragraph 25 about the participation of the faithful in Solemn High Mass also applies to the High Mass.

27. Also note the following points with regard to the sung Mass:

a) If the priest and his ministers go in procession by a long aisle, it would be permissible for the choir, after the singing of the Introit antiphon, and its psalm verse, to continue singing additional verses of the same psalm. The antiphon itself may be repeated after each verse or after every other verse; when the celebrant has reached the altar, the psalm ceases, and the *Gloria Patri* is sung, and finally the antiphon is repeated to conclude the Introit procession.

b) After the Offertory antiphon is sung, it is also allowed to sing the ancient Gregorian melodies of the original Offertory verses which once were sung after the antiphon.

#### **Additional Verses**

But if the Offertory antiphon is taken from a psalm, it is then permitted to sing additional verses of this same psalm. In this case, too, the antiphon may be repeated after each verse of the psalm, or after every second verse; when the offertory rite is finished at the altar the psalm is ended with the *Gloria Patri*, and the antiphon is repeated. If the antiphon is not taken from a psalm, then any psalm suited to the feast may be used. Another possibility is that any Latin song may be used after the Offertory antiphon provided it is suited to the spirit of this part of the Mass. The singing should never last beyond the "Secret".

c) The proper time for the chanting of the Communion antiphon is while the priest is receiving the holy Eucharist. But if the faithful are also to go to Communion the antiphon should be sung while they receive. If this antiphon, too, is taken from a psalm, additional verses of this psalm may be sung. In this case, too, the antiphon is repeated after each, or every second verse of the psalm; when distribution of Communion is finished, the psalm is closed with the *Gloria Patri*, and the antiphon is once again repeated. If the antiphon is not taken from a psalm, any psalm may be used which is suited to the feast, and to this part of the mass.

After the Communion antiphon is sung, and the distribution of Communion to the faithful still continues, it is also permitted to sing another Latin song in keeping with this part of the Mass.

Before coming to Communion the faithful may recite the three-fold *Domine, non sum dignus* together with the priest.

d) If the *Sanctus-Benedictus* are sung in Gregorian chant, they should be put together without interruption; otherwise, the *Benedictus* should be sung after the Consecration.

e) During the Consecration, the singing must stop, and there should be no playing of instruments; if this has been the custom, it should be discontinued.

- f) Between the Consecration, and the *Pater Noster* a devout silence is recommended.
- g) While the priest is giving the blessing to the faithful at the end of the Mass, there should be no organ playing; also, the celebrant must pronounce the words of the blessing so that all the faithful can understand them.

#### **At Low Mass**

##### *c. Participation of the faithful in low Mass.*

28. Care must be taken that the faithful assist at low Mass, too, "not as strangers or mute spectators" (*Divini cultus*, Dec. 20, 1928: AAS 21 [1929] 40), but as exercising that kind of participation demanded by so great, and fruitful a mystery.

29. The first way the faithful can participate in the low Mass is for each one, on his own initiative, to pay devout attention to the more important parts of the Mass (interior participation), or by following the approved customs in various localities (exterior participation).

Those who use a small missal, suitable to their own understanding, and pray with priest in the very words of the Church, are worthy of special praise. But all are not equally capable of correctly understanding the rites, and liturgical formulas; nor does everyone possess the same spiritual needs; nor do these needs remain constant in the same individual. Therefore, these people may find a more suitable or easier method of participation in the Mass when "they meditate devoutly on the mysteries of Jesus Christ, or perform other devotional exercises, and offer prayers which, though different in form from those of the sacred rites, are in essential harmony with them" (*Mediator Dei*, AAS 39 [1947] 560-561).

In this regard, it must be noted that if any local custom of playing the organ during low Mass might interfere with the participation of the faithful, either by common prayer or song, the custom is to be abolished. This applies not only to the organ, but also to the harmonium or any other musical instrument which is played without interruption. Therefore, in such Masses, there should be no instrumental music at the following times:

- a. After the priest reaches the altar until the Offertory;
- b. From the first versicles before the Preface until the *Sanctus* inclusive;
- c. From the Consecration until the *Pater Noster*, where the custom obtains;
- d. From the *Pater Noster* to the *Agnus Dei* inclusive; at the *Confiteor* before the Communion of the faithful ; while the Postcommunion prayer is being said, and during the Blessing at the end of the Mass.

#### **Prayers and Hymns**

30. The faithful can participate another way at the Eucharistic Sacrifice by saying prayers together or by singing hymns. The prayers and hymns must be chosen appropriately for the respective parts of the Mass, and as indicated in paragraph 14c.

31. A final method of participation, and the most perfect form, is for the congregation to make the liturgical responses to the prayers of the priest, thus holding a sort of dialogue with him, and reciting aloud the parts which properly belong to them.

There are four degrees or stages of this participation:

a) First, the congregation may make the easier liturgical responses to the prayers of the priest: *Amen; Et cum spiritu tuo; Deo gratias; Gloria tibi Domine; Laus tibi, Christe; Habemus ad Dominum; Dignum et justum est; Sed libera nos a malo;*

b) Secondly, the congregation may also say prayers, which, according to the rubrics, are said by the server, including the *Confiteor*, and the triple *Domine non sum dignus* before the faithful receive Holy Communion;

c) Thirdly, the congregation may say aloud with the celebrant parts of the Ordinary of the Mass: *Gloria in excelsis Deo; Credo; Sanctus-Benedictus; Agnus Dei;*

d) Fourthly, the congregation may also recite with the priest parts of the Proper of the Mass: Introit, Gradual, Offertory, Communion. Only more advanced groups who have been well trained will be able to participate with becoming dignity in this manner.

32. Since the *Pater Noster* is a fitting, and ancient prayer of preparation for Communion, the entire congregation may recite this prayer in unison with the priest in low Masses; the *Amen* at the end is to be said by all. This is to be done only in Latin, never in the vernacular.

33. The faithful may sing hymns during low Mass, if they are appropriate to the various parts of the mass.

34. Where the rubrics prescribe the *clara voce*, the celebrant must recite the prayers loud enough so that the faithful can properly, and conveniently follow the sacred rites. This must be given special attention in a large church, and before a large congregation.

### **The Mass in Choir**

#### *d. Conventual Mass, or the Mass in Choir.*

35. The conventional Mass, among all other liturgical ceremonies, has a special dignity: this is the Mass which must be celebrated daily in connection with the Divine Office by those whom the Church obliges to choir service.

For the Mass, together with the Divine Office, is the summit of all Christian worship; it is the fullness of praise offered daily to Almighty God in public, and external ceremony.

Since, however, this perfection of public, and corporate worship cannot be realized daily in every church, it is performed vicariously by those who have the "choir obligation", and are deputed for this service. This is especially true of cathedral churches acting in the name of the entire diocese.

Thus all "choir" ceremonies should be performed with special dignity and solemnity, making use of both chant and sacred music.

36. the conventional Mass should, therefore, be a solemn Mass, or at least a high Mass.

Even if particular laws or indults have dispensed from the solemnity of the "choir" Mass, the canonical hours are not to be recited during the conventional Mass. It would be more appropriate to celebrate a conventional low Mass according to the manner outlined in paragraph 31; however, any use of the vernacular is to be excluded.

### **The Conventional Mass**

37. Regarding the conventional Mass, the following prescriptions are to be observed:

- a) On each day only one conventional Mass is to be celebrated; this must correspond to the Office recited in choir unless the rubrics direct otherwise (*Additiones et variationes in rubricis Missalis*, ti. I, n. 4). However, if there are pious foundations or other legitimate reasons which require more than one conventional Mass, they still remain in force.
- b) The conventional Mass follows the rules of a sung or low Mass.
- c) Unless the superior of a community decides that it should be said after Sext or None, and this only for a serious reason, the conventional Mass is to be said after Terce.
- d) Conventional Masses "outside the choir", which until now were sometimes prescribed by the rubrics, are now abolished.

### *e. Assistance of priests in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and so-called "synchronized" Masses.*

38. In the Latin Church sacramental concelebration is limited by law to two specifically stated cases. The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, in a decision of May 23, 1947 (AAS 49 [1957] 370), declared invalid the concelebration of the sacrifice of the Mass by priests who do not pronounce the words of consecration, even though they wear the sacred vestments, and no matter what their intention may be. But when there are many priests gathered for a meeting, it is permissible "for only one of their number to celebrate a Mass at which the others (whether all of them or many) are present, and receive Holy Communion from one priest celebrant". However, "this is to be done only for a justifiable reason, and provided the Bishop has not forbidden it because of the danger that the faithful might think it strange"; also, the practice must not be motivated by the error, pointed out by the Supreme Pontiff Pius XII, which taught that "the celebration of one Mass at which a hundred priests devoutly assist is equal to a hundred Masses celebrated by a hundred priests" (cf. Address to Cardinals and Bishops, Nov. 2, 1954: AAS 46 [1954] 669-670; and Address to International Congress on Pastoral Liturgy at Assisi, Sep. 22, 1956: AAS 48 [1956] 716-717).

39. So-called "synchronized" Masses, are, however, forbidden. These are Masses in which two or more priests simultaneously, on one or more altars, so time their celebration of Mass that all their words, and actions are pronounced, and performed together at one and the same time, even with the aid of modern instruments to assure absolute uniformity or "synchronization", particularly if many priests are celebrating.

### **The "Opus Dei"**

### **B. Divine Office.**

40. The Divine Office is said either in choir, in common, or alone.

The Office is said in choir when it is recited by a community obliged by Church law to choir duty; it is said in common when recited by a community not bound to choir duty.

However it is said, whether in choir, in common, or alone, it must always be looked upon as an act of public worship offered to God in the name of the Church, if it said by persons deputed to this obligation by the Church.

41. The Divine Office by its very nature is so constructed that it should be performed by mutually alternating voices; moreover, some parts even presuppose that they be sung.

42. Thus the celebration of the Divine Office in choir must be retained, and promoted. Likewise, its performance in common, including the singing of at least some parts of the Office, is earnestly recommended when circumstances of places, persons, and time permit.

43. The recitation of the psalms in choir or in common, whether sung in Gregorian chant or simply recited, should be performed in a solemn, and becoming manner; care should be taken that the proper tones, appropriate pauses, and perfect harmony be preserved.

44. If the psalms of a particular canonical hour are to be sung, they should be sung at least partly according to the Gregorian tones; this may be done either with alternate psalms, or with alternate verses of the same psalm.

### **Vespers When Possible**

45. Where the ancient, and venerable custom of singing Vespers according to the rubrics together with the people on Sundays, and feast days is still practiced, it should be continued; where this is not done, it should be re-introduced, as far as possible, at least several times a year.

The local Ordinary should take care that the celebration of evening Masses does not interfere with the practice of singing Vespers on Sundays, and feast days. For evening Masses, which the local Ordinary may permit "for the spiritual good of a sizable number of the faithful" (Apostolic Constitution *Christus Dominus*, Jan. 6, 1953: AAS 45 [1953] 15-24; Instruction of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, same day: AAS 45 [1953] 47-51; Motu Proprio *Sacram Communionem*, March 19, 1957: AAS 49 [1957] 177-178), must not be at the expense of other liturgical services, and private devotions by which the people ordinarily sanctify the holy days.

Hence, the custom of singing Vespers or of holding private devotions with Benediction should be retained wherever such is done, even though evening Mass is celebrated.

46. In clerical seminaries, however, both diocesan and religious, at least part of the Divine Office should frequently be said in common; so far as possible if should be sung. On Sundays and feast days, Vespers at least must be sung (cf. canon 1367, 3).

### **C. Benediction**

47. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is a true liturgical ceremony; hence it must be conducted in accordance with the "Roman Ritual", ti. X, ch V, no.5.

Wherever an immemorial custom exists of imparting the Eucharistic Benediction in another way, the Ordinary may give his permission for the custom to continue; but it is recommended that the Roman custom of giving Benediction be prudently given preference.

## Chapter III-2. Kinds of Sacred Music.

### A. Sacred polyphony.

48. Compositions of sacred polyphony, by the old masters as well as by contemporary artists, are not to be introduced into the liturgy unless it has first been established that, either in their original form or in arrangements, they comply fully with the ideals, and admonitions set forth in the encyclical *Musicæ sacræ disciplina* (AAS 48 [1956] 18-20). If there is any doubt, the diocesan commission on sacred music is to be consulted.

49. Ancient manuscripts of this music still lying about in archives should be uncovered, and if necessary, steps taken for their preservation. Musicologists should make critical editions of them as well as editions suitable for liturgical use.

### B. Modern sacred music.

50. Modern compositions of sacred music are only to be used during liturgical ceremonies if they conform to the spirit of the liturgy, and to the ideals of sacred music as laid down in the encyclical *Musicæ sacræ disciplina* (AAS 48 [1956] 19-20). Judgments in this matter are to be made by the diocesan commission of sacred music.

### C. Popular Religious Song

51. Hymns ought to be highly encouraged, and fostered, for this form of music does much to imbue the Christian with a deep religious spirit, and to raise the thoughts of the faithful to the truths of our faith.

Hymns have their own part to play in all the festive solemnities of Christian life, whether public or of a more personal nature; they also find their part in the daily labors of the Christian. But they attain their ideal usefulness in all private devotions, whether conducted outside or inside the church. At times their use is even permitted during liturgical functions, in accord with the directions given above in paragraphs 13-15.

52. If hymns are to attain their purpose, their texts "must conform to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, plainly stating, and explaining it. The vocabulary should be simple, and free of dramatic, and meaningless verbiage. Their tunes, however brief, and easy, should evince a religious dignity and propriety" (*Musicæ sacræ disciplina* (AAS 48 [1956] 20). Local Ordinaries should carefully see that these ideals are observed.

53. All who have the training should be encouraged to compile serviceable collections of these hymns which have been handed down either orally or in writing, even the most ancient, and to publish them for the use of the faithful, with the approval of the local Ordinary.

#### D. Religious music.

54. The type of music which inspires its hearers with religious sentiments, and even devotion, and yet, because of its special character cannot be used in liturgical functions, is nevertheless worthy of high esteem, and ought to be cultivated in its proper time. This music justly merits, therefore, the title "religious music".

55. The proper places for the performance of such music are concert halls, theaters, or auditoriums, but not the church, which is consecrated to the worship of God.

However, if none of these places are available, and the local Ordinary judges that a concert of religious music might be advantageous for the spiritual welfare of the faithful, he may permit a concert of this kind to be held in a church, provided the following provisions are observed:

- a) The local Ordinary must give his permission for each concert in writing.
- b) Requests for such permissions must also be in writing, stating the date of the concert, the compositions to be performed, the names of the directors (organist, and choral director), and the performers.
- c) The local Ordinary is not to give this permission without first consulting the diocesan commission of sacred music, and perhaps other authorities upon whose judgment he may rely, and then only if he knows that the music is not only outstanding for its true artistic value, but also for its sincere Christian spirit; he must also be assured that the performers possess the qualities to be mentioned below in paragraphs 97, and 98.
- d) Before the concert, the Blessed Sacrament should be removed from the church, and reserved in one of the chapels, or even in the sacristy, in a respectful way. If this cannot be done, the audience should be told that the Blessed Sacrament is present in the church, and the pastor should see to it that there is no danger of irreverence.
- e) The main body of the church is not to be used for selling admission tickets or distributing programs of the concert.
- f) The musicians, singers, and audience should conduct themselves, and dress in a manner befitting the seriousness, and holiness of the sacred edifice in which they are present.
- g) If circumstances permit, the concert should be concluded by some private devotion, or better still, with benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In this way the devotion, and edification of the faithful, which was the purpose of the concert, will be crowned by a religious service.

#### Chapter III-3. Books of Liturgical Chant.

56. The standard editions of the liturgical chant of the Roman Church are:  
Roman Gradual, with the Ordinary of the Mass.  
Roman Antiphonal, for the Day Hours.  
Offices of the Dead, Holy Week, and Christmas.

57. All publication rights to the Gregorian melodies as they appear in the liturgical books approved by the Roman Church are the property of the Holy See.

58. The following decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites remain in force:

*Instruction on the Publication, and Approval of Books Containing the Gregorian Liturgical Chant*, Aug. 11, 1905 (Decr. Auth. SRC 4166)

*Declaration Concerning the Publication and Approval of Books Containing the Gregorian Liturgical Chant*, Feb. 14, 1906 (Decr. Auth. SRC 4178);

and the decree which treats of particular questions regarding the approval of books containing the chant for the "Propers" of certain dioceses, and religious congregations, issued Feb. 24, 1911 (Decr. Auth. SRC 4260).

The rules established by the Sacred Congregation of Rites on *Authorization to Publish Liturgical Books*, Aug. 10, 1946 (AAS 38 [1946] 371-372), also apply to books of liturgical chant.

58. Thus, the authentic Gregorian chant is that which is published in the standard Vatican editions, or which has been approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites for a particular church or religious community. Publishers who have this authorization are obliged, therefore, to reproduce both the melody, and the text exactly as approved in all details.

The rhythmic signs which have been inserted into some chant editions on private authority are permitted so long as they not alter the melodic line of the grouping of the notes, as they appear in the Vatican editions.

## Chapter III-4. Musical instruments and bells.

### A. Some General principles.

60. The following principles for the use of musical instruments in the sacred liturgy are to be recalled:

a) Because of the nature, sanctity, and dignity of the sacred liturgy, the playing of any musical instrument should be as perfect as possible. It would be preferable to omit the use of instruments entirely (whether it be the organ only, or any other instrument), than to play them in a manner unbecoming their purpose. As a general rule it is better to do something well, however modest, than to attempt something more elaborate without the proper means.

b) The difference between sacred, and secular music must be taken into consideration. Some musical instruments, such as the classic organ, are naturally appropriate for sacred music; others, such as string instruments which are played with a bow, are easily adapted to liturgical use. But there are some instruments which, by common estimation, are so associated with secular music that they are not at all adaptable for sacred use.

c) Finally, only instruments which are personally played by a performer are to be used in the sacred liturgy, not those which are played mechanically or automatically.

## B. The classic organ and similar instruments.

61. The principal musical instrument for solemn liturgical ceremonies of the Latin Church has been and remains the classic pipe organ.

62. An organ destined for liturgical use, even if small, should be designed according to the norms of organ building, and be equipped with the type of pipes suitable for sacred use. Before it is to be used it should be properly blessed, and as a sacred object, receive proper care.

63. Besides the classic organ, the harmonium or reed organ may also be used provided that its tonal quality, and volume are suitable for sacred use.

64. As a substitute, the electronic organ may be tolerated temporarily for liturgical functions, if the means for obtaining even a small pipe organ are not available. In each case, however, the explicit permission of the local Ordinary is required. He, on his part, should consult the diocesan commission on sacred music, and others trained in this field, who can make suggestions for rendering such an instrument more suitable for sacred use.

65. The musicians who play the instruments mentioned in paragraphs 61-64 should be sufficiently skilled in their art so that they can accompany the sacred chant or any other music, and can also play alone with appropriate skill. Indeed, since it is also often necessary to be able to improvise music suited to the various phases of the liturgical action, they should possess sufficient knowledge of, and capability in the techniques of organ playing, and of sacred music.

Organists should religiously care for the instruments entrusted to them. Whenever they are seated at the organ during sacred functions, organists should be conscious of the active part they are taking in glorifying God, and edifying the faithful.

66. The organ playing, whether during liturgical functions or private devotions, should be carefully adapted to the liturgical season and feast day, to the nature of the rites and exercises themselves, and to their various parts.

67. The organ should be located in a suitable place near the main altar, unless ancient custom or a special reason approved by the local Ordinary demand otherwise; but the location should be such that the singers or musicians occupying a raised platform are not conspicuous to the congregation in the main body of the church.

## C. Sacred instrumental music.

68. Other instruments besides the organ, especially the smaller bowed instruments, may be used during the liturgical functions, particularly on days of greater solemnity. These may be used together with the organ or without it, for instrumental numbers or for accompanying the singing. However, the following rules derived from the principles stated above (no.60) are to strictly observed:

a) the instruments are truly suitable for sacred use;

b) they are to be played with such seriousness, and religious devotion that every suggestion of raucous secular music is avoided, and the devotion of the faithful is fostered;

c) the director, organist, and other instrumentalists should be well trained in instrumental techniques, and the laws of sacred music.

69. The local Ordinary, with the aid of his diocesan commission on sacred music, should see to it that these rules on the use of instruments during the sacred liturgy are faithfully observed. If need be, they should not hesitate to issue special instructions in this regard as required by local conditions, and approved customs.

#### **D. Musical instruments, and mechanical devices.**

70. Musical instruments which by common acceptance, and use are suitable only for secular music must be entirely excluded from all liturgical functions, and private devotions.

71. The use of automatic instruments and machines, such as the automatic organ, phonograph, radio, tape or wire recorders, and other similar machines, is absolutely forbidden in liturgical functions and private devotions, whether they are held inside or outside the church, even if these machines be used only to transmit sermons or sacred music, or to substitute for the singing of the choir or faithful, or even just to support it.

However, such machines may be used, even inside the church, but not during services of any kind, whether liturgical or private, in order to give the people a chance to listen to the voice of the Supreme Pontiff or the local Ordinary, or the sermons of others. These mechanical devices may be also be used to instruct the faithful in Christian doctrine or in the sacred chant or hymn singing; finally they may be used in processions which take place outside the church, as a means of directing, and supporting the singing of the people.

72. Loudspeakers may be used even during liturgical functions, and private devotions for the purpose of amplifying the living voice of the priest-celebrant or the commentator, or others who, according to the rubrics or by order of the pastor, are expected to make their voices heard.

73. The use of any kind of projector, and particularly movie projectors, with or without sound track, is strictly forbidden in church for any reason, even if it be for a pious, religious, or charitable cause.

In constructing or remodeling meeting halls near the church or under it (if there is no other place), care must be taken that there is no direct entrance from the hall into the church, and that the noise from the hall, especially if it is going to be used for entertainments, shall in no way profane the holiness, and silence of the sacred place.

#### **E. The transmission of sacred functions over radio and television.**

74. For any radio or television broadcast of liturgical functions or private devotions, the local Ordinary must give his express permission; this is required whether they are being held inside or outside the church. Before granting permission, the Ordinary must be sure that:

a) the singing and music fully comply with the laws of the liturgy, and sacred music;

b) in the case of a television broadcast, all those taking part in the ceremonies are so well instructed that the ceremonies may be carried out in full conformity with the rubrics, and with fitting dignity.

Standing permission may be granted by the local Ordinary for broadcasts to originate regularly from a particular church if, upon inquiry, he is certain that all the requirements will faithfully be met.

75. Television cameras should be kept out of the sanctuary as much as possible; they should never be located so close to the altar as to interfere with the sacred rites.

Cameramen and technicians should conduct themselves with the devotion becoming a sacred place and the rites, and not disturb the prayerful spirit of the congregation, especially at those moments which demand the utmost recollection.

76. Photographers in particular should observe these directives, since it is much easier for them to move about with their cameras.

77. Each pastor is to see to it that the prescriptions given in 75 and 76 are faithfully observed in his church. Local Ordinaries, moreover, shall not fail to issue more specific directives as circumstances require.

78. Since the very nature of a radio broadcast requires that the listeners be able to follow the action without interruption, a broadcast Mass will be more effective if the priest pronounces the words a little more loudly than demanded by the "low voice" of the rubrics, and correspondingly pronounces louder still the words to be said in a clear voice according to the rubrics; this is particularly desirable when there is no commentator. Then the listeners will be able to follow the entire Mass with no difficulty.

79. It is well to remind the radio and television audiences before the program that listening to the broadcast does not fulfill their obligation to attend Mass.

#### F. The times when the playing of musical instruments is forbidden.

80. The playing of the organ, and even more, of other instruments, is an embellishment of the sacred liturgy; for that reason they should be accommodated to the varying degrees of joy in different liturgical seasons, and feast days.

81. Accordingly, the playing of the organ, and all other instruments is forbidden for liturgical functions, except Benediction, during the following times:

- a) Advent, from first Vespers of the first Sunday of Advent until None of the Vigil of Christmas;
- b) Lent and Passontide, from Matins of Ash Wednesday until the hymn Gloria in excelsis Deo in the Solemn Mass of the Easter Vigil;
- c) the September Ember days if the ferial Mass and Office are celebrated;
- d) in all Offices and Masses of the Dead.

82. Only the organ may be used on the Sundays of Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima, and on the ferial days following these Sundays.

83. However, during the seasons, and days just mentioned, the following exceptions to the rule may be made:

a) the organ may be played, and other instruments used on holy days of obligation, and holidays (except Sundays), on the feasts of the principal local patron saint, the titular day, and the dedication anniversary of the local church, the titular or founder's day of a religious congregation, and on the occasion of some extraordinary solemnity;

b) the organ only (including the harmonium or reed organ) may be used on the third Sunday of Advent, and the fourth Sunday of Lent, on Thursday of Holy Week during the Mass of Chrism, and during the solemn evening Mass of the Last Supper from the beginning to the end of the hymn *Gloria in excelsis Deo*;

c) the organ only may be used at Mass, and Vespers for the sole purpose of supporting the singing.

Local Ordinaries may determine more precisely the application of these prohibitions, and permissions according to the approved local or regional customs.

84. Throughout the Sacred Triduum, from the midnight before Holy Thursday until the hymn *Gloria in excelsis Deo* of the Solemn Mass of the Easter Vigil, the organ or harmonium shall remain completely silent, excepting the instance mentioned in paragraph 83b.

This prohibition holds even for private devotions during the Sacred Triduum; no exceptions or contrary custom are to be tolerated.

85. Pastors and others in charge must not fail to explain to the people the meaning of this liturgical silence. They should also take care that during these seasons, and particular days the other liturgical restrictions on decorating the altar are likewise observed.

### **G. Bells.**

86. The ancient and highly approved tradition of ringing bells in the Latin Church should be devotedly carried on by all who have this responsibility.

87. Church bells may not be used until they have been solemnly consecrated, or at least blessed; thereafter, they should be treated with the care due to sacred objects.

88. Approved customs, and the various ways of ringing bells, according to the occasion, should be carefully preserved. Local Ordinaries should set down the traditional, and customary practices, or prescribe them if there are none.

89. Attachments designed to amplify the sound of the bells or to make them easier to ring, may be permitted by the local Ordinary after consultation with experts. If there is doubt the matter should be referred to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

90. Besides the various customary, and approved ways of ringing bells mentioned in paragraph 88 some places have an arrangement of smaller bells, hanging in a bell tower, for the purpose of ringing out various melodies. This is commonly called a carillon. It is to entirely excluded from liturgical use. These small bells may not be consecrated or blessed according to the solemn rite in the Roman Pontifical, but they may receive a simple blessing.

91. Every effort should be made to furnish all churches, public and semi-public oratories with at least one or two bells, even though they are small. But it is strictly forbidden to substitute any kind of

machine or instrument which merely imitates or amplifies the sound of bells mechanically or automatically. Such machines may be used, however, as a carillon in accordance with what has been said above.

92. The prescriptions of canons 1169, 1185, and 612 of the Code of Canon Law are to be exactly observed.

## Chapter III-5. Persons having principal functions in sacred music and the sacred liturgy.

93. The priest-celebrant is the presiding officer in all liturgical functions. All others participate in the service in their own proper manner. Thus:

a) Clerics present at a liturgical ceremony in the manner, and form prescribed by the rubrics, who fulfill the role of sacred or minor ministers or sing in the choir or *schola cantorum*, exercise a liturgical ministry which is direct, and proper to them by virtue of their ordination or elevation to the clerical state.

b) The laity also participate actively in the liturgy by virtue of their baptismal character which enables them, in their own way, to offer the divine Victim to God the Father with the priest in the holy sacrifice of the Mass itself (cf. *Mystici Corporis Christi*, June 29, 1943; AAS 35 [1943] 232-233; *Mediator Dei*, Nov. 20, 1947: AAS 39 [1947] 555-556).

c) Therefore, laity of the male sex, whether boys, young men, or adults, when appointed by competent ecclesiastical authority to serve at the altar or to perform the sacred music, and when they fulfill this office in the manner, and form prescribed by the rubrics, exercise a liturgical ministry which is direct, though delegated. If they are singers, they must be a part of the choir or *schola cantorum*.

94. In addition to observing the rubrics carefully, the priest-celebrant and the sacred ministers should endeavor to execute their song parts as correctly, distinctly, and artistically as possible.

95. When the ministers can be chosen for a liturgical function, preference should be given to those who have the greater singing ability, especially if it is a more solemn liturgical function or one which has more difficult chants, or is to be broadcast or televised.

### **The Commentator**

96. The active participation of the faithful can be more easily brought about with the help of a commentator, especially in holy Mass, and in some of the more complex liturgical ceremonies. At suitable times he should briefly explain the rites themselves, and the prayers of the priest and ministers; he should also direct the external participation of the congregation, that is, their responses, prayers, and singing. Such a commentator may be used if the following rules are observed:

a) The role of commentator should properly be carried out by a priest or at least a cleric. If none is available, a layman of good Christian character, and well instructed in his duties may fill the role. Women, however, may never act as commentator; in case of necessity, a woman would be permitted only to lead the prayers, and singing of the congregation.

- b) If the commentator is a priest or a cleric, he should wear a surplice, and stand in the sanctuary or near the Communion rail, or at the lectern or pulpit. If he is a layman, he should stand in a convenient place in front of the congregation, but not in the sanctuary or in the pulpit.
- c) The explanations and directions to be given by the commentator should be prepared in writing; they should be brief, clear, and to the point; they should be spoken at a suitable time, and in a moderate tone of voice; they should never interfere with the prayers of the priest who is celebrating. In short, they should be a real help, and not a hindrance to the devotion of the congregation.
- d) In directing the prayers of the congregation, the commentator should recall the prescriptions given above in paragraph 14c.
- e) In those places where the Holy See has permitted the reading of the Epistle and Gospel in the vernacular after the Latin text has been chanted, the commentator may not substitute for the celebrant, deacon, or subdeacon in reading them.
- f) The commentator should follow the celebrant closely, and so accompany the sacred action that it is not delayed or interrupted, and the entire ceremony carried out with harmony, dignity, and devotion.

#### **Good Example Required**

- 97. Those who have a part in the sacred music -composers, organists, choir directors, singers, and instrumentalists- should above all be outstanding Christians, and give example to the rest of the faithful, conformable to their role as direct or indirect participants in the sacred liturgy.
- 98. Besides excelling in Christian faith and morals, these persons must also possess the training necessary to fulfill their particular role of participation in the liturgy.
- a) Composers of sacred music should have a thorough knowledge of the historical, dogmatic or doctrinal, practical, and rubrical aspects of the liturgy; they should know Latin; and finally they should be well trained in the art, and the history of both sacred, and secular music.
- b) Organists, and choir directors should also have a comprehensive knowledge of the liturgy, and a sufficient understanding of Latin; and finally they should be well trained in their art, and able to carry out their role worthily, and competently.
- c) Singers, both boys and adults, should be taught the meaning of the liturgical functions, and of the texts they sing insofar as they are capable of comprehending, for then their singing will be inspired by an understanding mind, and a loving heart, and be truly rendered as befits the service of an intelligent person. They should also be taught to pronounce the Latin words correctly, and distinctly. Pastors, and those directly in charge must see to it that good order, and true devotion reign in that part of the church occupied by the singers.
- d) Instrumentalists who perform sacred music should not only be well trained in the techniques of their instruments, but should also know how to adapt them to the playing of sacred music. They should be well enough instructed in the sacred liturgy that their devotion will be evidenced by an artistic performance.

#### ***The Schola Cantorum***

99. It is highly desirable that a choir or *schola cantorum* be established in all cathedral churches, in parish churches, and all other churches of importance where the liturgical functions can be carried out as described in paragraph 93a, and c.

100. Wherever such a choir cannot be organized, a choir of the faithful, either mixed or consisting only of women or girls, can be permitted. But such a choir should take its place outside the sanctuary or Communion rail. The men should be separated from the women or girls so that anything unbecoming may be avoided. Local Ordinaries are to issue precise regulations about these matters, and pastors are to see to their enforcement (Decr. Auth. SCR 3964, 4210, 4231, and the encyclical *Musicæ sacræ disciplina*: AAS [1956] 23).

101. It would be ideal, and worthy of commendation if organists, choir directors, singers, instrumentalists, and others engaged in the service of the Church, would contribute their talents for the love of God, and in the spirit of religious devotion, without salary; should they be unable to offer their services free of charge, Christian justice, and charity demand that the church give them a just wage, according to the recognized standards of the locality, and provisions of law.

102. The local Ordinary should, after consultation with the diocesan commission of sacred music, fix a scale of wages to be observed throughout the diocese for the various offices mentioned in the previous paragraph.

103. An adequate program of social security should also be set up for these persons in accordance with civil law; if the law makes no provisions, the local Ordinary himself should make regulations regarding social security.

## Chapter III-6. Duty to cultivate sacred music and sacred liturgy.

### A. Training of the clergy, and people.

104. Sacred music, and the liturgy are intimately bound together; sacred chant forms an integral part of the liturgy (no. 21), while hymns are used to a great extent in private devotions, and at times even during liturgical functions themselves (no. 19). For that reason, instruction in both sacred music, and sacred liturgy cannot be separated from each other: both belong to the life of the Christian, though in varying degree, depending upon one's own of life, and rank among the clergy, and faithful.

Hence, every Christian should have some instruction in the sacred liturgy, and sacred music, in accordance with his station in life.

105. The Christian family is the natural, and in fact, primary school of Christian education. It is in the family circle that the little children are first introduced to the knowledge, and life of a Christian. The aim of this first education should be that the children learn to take part in the private devotions, and even in the liturgical functions, particularly the Mass, as their age, and understanding enable them. Furthermore, they should begin to learn, and love the hymns sung both in the home, and in the church (cf. above, no. 9, 51-53).

106. In private or elementary schools the following directions should be observed:

- a) If the schools are conducted by Catholics, and are free to set up their own programs, the school children are to be given additional training in sacred music, and hymn. Above all, they are to be more thoroughly instructed in the holy sacrifice of the mass, adapted to their own age level, and in the manner of participating in it; they should also be taught to sing the simpler Gregorian melodies.
- b) If the schools are public, and subject to the laws of the state, the local Ordinaries should see to it that these children, too, are educated in the sacred liturgy, and the sacred chant.

107. This applies to an even greater degree to the intermediate or secondary schools, so that adolescents may acquire the maturity to lead a good social, and Christian life.

108. Universities, and colleges of arts and sciences, too, must strive to deepen and further this musical, and liturgical education. It is important that those who have completed higher studies, and who take upon themselves the responsibilities of public life, have a complete appreciation of all the aspects of Christian life. Thus all priests who have charge of university students should endeavor to imbue in them a deeper understanding of the sacred liturgy, and the sacred chant, both as to its theory, and its practice. If circumstances permit, they should use the forms of Mass participation described in paragraphs 26 and 31.

109. Young men aspiring to the priesthood need an even greater knowledge of the liturgy, and sacred music than do the faithful; wherefore, they should be given complete and sound instruction in both. Hence, everything prescribed by Canon Law in this matter (canon 1354, 1 and 3; 1365, 2), or specifically ordered by competent authority, must be observed in every detail under serious obligation of conscience (cf. especially the apostolic constitution *Divini cultus*, on the wide promotion of the liturgy, Gregorian chant, and sacred music, of Dec. 20, 1928: AAS 31 [1929] 33-41).

110. Men and women religious, as well as members of Secular institutes, should be given a thorough and progressive formation in both the sacred liturgy, and the sacred chant, beginning with their probation and novitiate.

Competent instructors should be procured to teach, direct, and accompany the sacred chant in all the houses of these communities, and those dependent upon them. Religious superiors should see to it that the entire community is adequately trained in the chant, and not just select members.

111. Some churches, by their very nature, require that the sacred liturgy, and sacred music be carried out with special dignity, and solemnity. Such churches are the principal parish churches, collegiate and cathedral churches, and important centers of pilgrimages. Those attached to these churches, whether clergy, servers, or musicians, should diligently prepare themselves to perform the sacred chant, and carry out the liturgical functions in a pre-eminent fashion.

112. The foreign missions present special problems in the introduction, and adaptation of the sacred liturgy, and sacred chant.

A distinction must first be made between people who have their own culture, very rich, and in some instances going back for thousands of years, and people who still have not developed a high level of culture.

With this in mind, some general principles may be established:

- a) Missionary priests must be trained in the sacred liturgy, and sacred chant.
- b) If the people to whom the priests are sent already have a highly developed musical culture, the missionaries should cautiously try to adapt this native music to sacred use. In particular, private devotions should be arranged so that the native faithful can use their own traditional language, and musical idiom to express their religious devotion. But the missionaries should remember that even the Gregorian melodies can sometimes easily be sung by native peoples, as experience has shown, because these melodies often bear close resemblances to their own native music.
- c) But if the natives are of a less civilized race, then what has been said in paragraph "b" must be adapted to suit the capabilities, and character of these peoples. Where there is a good religious family life and community of spirit, the missionaries should be very careful not to extinguish it, but rather to rid it of superstitions, and imbue it with a true Christian spirit.

## **B. Public and private schools of sacred music.**

113. Pastors and those in charge shall see to it that there are servers present, boys, young men, and even adults, for liturgical functions and private devotions. These servers should be noted for their devotion, well instructed in the ceremonies, and adequately trained in sacred music, and hymns.

114. The boy choir, an organization praised over and over by the Holy See (Apostolic constitution *Divini cultus*: AAS 21 [1929] 28; *Musicæ sacræ disciplina*: AAS 48 [1956] 23), is even more important to the performance of sacred music, and the singing of hymns.

It is desirable, and every effort should be made, that every church have its own boy choir. The boys should be thoroughly instructed in the sacred liturgy, and particularly in the art of singing with devotion.

### **Diocesan Institutes**

115. Moreover, it is recommended that every diocese have a school or institute of chant and organ where organists, choir directors, singers and instrumentalists can be properly trained.

In some cases a number of dioceses will prefer to collaborate in organizing such a school. Pastors and others in charge should be alert in detecting, and sending talented young men to these schools, and encourage them in their studies.

116. The great importance of academies and schools of higher learning which are established specifically for more comprehensive studies in sacred music must be recognized. The Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome, established by St. Pius X, holds first place among these.

Local Ordinaries should send priests with special talent and a love for this art to such schools, particularly to the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome.

117. In addition to the schools established to teach sacred music, many societies, named after St. Gregory or St. Cecilia or other saints, have been founded to promote sacred music in various ways. The increase of such societies and their associations on a national or even international scale can do much to further the cause of sacred music.

118. Since the time of Pius X, every diocese has been required to have a special commission of sacred music (Motu proprio *Inter sollicitudines*, Nov. 22, 1903: AAS 36 [1903-1904] no. 24; Decr. Auth. SRC

4121). The members of this commission, both priests and laymen, specially selected for their knowledge, experience, and talent in the various kinds of sacred music, are to be appointed by the local Ordinary.

The Ordinaries of a number of dioceses may, if they wish, establish a joint commission.

Since sacred music is so closely bound with the liturgy and with sacred art, commissions of sacred art (Circular letter of the Secretariate of State, Sep. 1, 1924, Prot. 34215), and of the sacred liturgy (Mediator Dei, Nov. 20, 1947: AAS 39 [1947] 561-562) are also to be established in every diocese. These three commissions may meet together -at times it is even advisable- to work out their common problems by a mutual exchange of opinions and solutions.

Local Ordinaries should see to it that these commissions meet frequently, or as often as circumstances require. Moreover, the local Ordinary himself should occasionally preside at these meetings.

This instruction on sacred music, and the sacred liturgy was submitted to His Holiness Pope Pius XII by the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. His Holiness deigned to give his special approval and authority to all its prescriptions. He also commanded that it be promulgated, and be conscientiously observed by all to whom it applies.

Anything contrary to what is herein contained is no longer in force.

Issued at Rome, from the office of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, on the feast of St. Pius X, Sept. 3, 1958.

C. Card. Cicognani, Prefect  
+ A. Carinci, Archbp. of Seleucia, Secretary

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