

From the  
Pastor's Desk 

Last week I was blessed to spend a number of days in Washington D.C. at Catholic University with musicians from around the country for a conference on sacred music. David Hughes, our choir master, and several members of the choir also attended the conference. The *Church Music Association of America* ([www.musicasacra.com](http://www.musicasacra.com)) holds this annual conference to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Church's sacred music, most particularly Gregorian chant and polyphony. Although this music is not often heard in churches today, it is worth reacquainting ourselves with this beautiful and ancient tradition.

Sacred music is by definition of a different character than the music that we hear in the world. The word *sacred* means "set apart", and in this case different than the secular music on the radio or in the theatre. Sacred music is eternal and timeless, not subject to the trends of pop culture.

Pope John Paul II has written that, "Not all musical forms can be considered suitable for liturgical celebrations". The music must possess a "sense of prayer, dignity, and beauty" so that there will be an "entry into the sphere of the sacred." Its very purpose is to foster contemplation so as to sanctify the people and glorify God.

The Church states that the "supreme model for sacred music" is Gregorian chant. Gregorian chant is the liturgical music that the Church has been using right from its earliest days. Rather than a "style", it is the music and words of the Mass itself, sung in unison to express unity. It is written in Latin, the language of the Church, which draws us out of our time and place so that we can better perceive the eternal mysteries which normally reveal themselves in a more subtle manner.

The word *polyphony* means "many-voices" and organically grew out of Gregorian chant. It is a music with several independent lines of voices, generally soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Like Gregorian chant, it is a music endorsed by the Catholic Church as most appropriate for the sacrifice of the Mass.

I am very pleased that our choirs, led by David Hughes, are trying to expose St. Mary's to these beautiful forms of sacred music, most specifically at the 11:00 Mass. It helps us to pray better by promoting stillness and silence, unites us with the timeless musical tradition of the Church, and gives God great glory.

Because this musical tradition has not been heard as much in recent years it may seem a bit awkward at first. In fact its soft, rhythmic breathing patterns can be more demanding on the people because they are accustomed to more fast paced, secular sounds. Yet the most special gifts in life are often more challenging to appreciate. If we are patient, learning to value its subtle forms of expression, we will find what so many saints have discovered before us, that Gregorian chant and polyphony are the music of angels, and most appropriate for the liturgy. As Pope Benedict XVI (himself a musician) has written, this sacred music "elevates the senses by uniting them with the spirit."

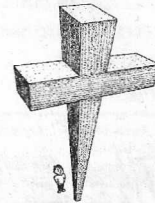
I pray through the intercession of St. Gregory the Great that in the coming years we will be able to appreciate these great gifts of Gregorian chant and polyphony even more.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Greg J. Markey  
Pastor



**First Friday this Friday, July 6, with adoration from 8:30 am until 7:00 pm. Benediction, the solemn blessing with the Blessed Sacrament will be at 6:50 pm. Please join us.**



**Prayer for the Success of the Bridgeport Diocese Pastoral Plan:**

Father of Love, You sent your Son Jesus Christ to proclaim the Good News, to redeem us from sin, and to call us to discipleship in your Church. Look with love on your family of faith, in the diocese of Bridgeport, as we implement a Pastoral Plan for Evangelization. In the power of the Holy Spirit grant us a spirit of unity, wisdom and love, so that we may follow in the footsteps of Your Son, by bearing witness to Your Gospel in word and deed. Grant this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for the Week of July 1, 2007**

Sunday: 1 Kgs 19:16b, 19-21/Gal 5:1, 13-18/Lk 9:51-62  
Monday: Gn 18:16-33/Mt 8:18-22  
Tuesday: Eph 2:19-22/Jn 20:24-29  
Wednesday: Gn 21:5, 8-20a/Mt 8:28-34  
Thursday: Gn 22:1b-19/Mt 9:1-8  
Friday: Gn 23:1-4, 19; 24:1-8, 62-67/Mt 9:9-13  
Saturday: Gn 27:1-5, 15-29/Mt 9:14-17  
Next Sunday: Is 66:10-14c/Gal 6:14-18/Lk 10:1-12, 17-20 or 10:1-9

**JOIN THE CONVERSATION!** Bishop William Lori has started a "blog" to share news, perspectives, and information about the Church directly and frequently. The blog is for everyone with an Internet connection. Simply log onto [www.BishopLoriBlog.org](http://www.BishopLoriBlog.org) to read the latest post or ask a question. Bishop Lori intends to have a new post each week and answer some questions from previous posts. Please visit and participate in this new way to communicate and share perspectives on our faith!



*As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." - Lk 9:57-58*