

SACRED MUSIC

Fall 2004

Volume 131 No. 3





*Interior, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome
Early Christian, 432—440 A.D. Later Alterations*

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Volume 131, Number 3, Fall 2004

EDITORIAL 3

WHY SACRED MUSIC MATTERS 5
Arlene Oost-Zimmer and Jeffrey Tucker

CHILDREN AND CHANT 21
Arlene Oost-Zimmer

INTERVIEW OF MR. HAROLD UNVERFETH 23
by Susan Treacy

REVIEWS 25

NEWS 27

CONTRIBUTORS 27

SACRED MUSIC Continuation of *Caecilia*, published by the Society of St. Caecilia since 1874, and *The Catholic Choirmaster*, published by the Society of St. Gregory of America since 1915. Published quarterly by the Church Music Association of America. Office of Publication: 134 Christendom Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630-5103.
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*Membership, Circulation
and Advertising:* P.O. Box 960, Front Royal, VA 22630

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Membership in the Church Music Association of America includes a subscription to SACRED MUSIC. Membership is \$30.00 annually; student membership is \$15.00 annually. Single copies are \$7.50. Send applications and changes of address to SACRED MUSIC, P.O. Box 960, Front Royal, VA 22630. Make checks payable to the Church Music Association of America.

Library of Congress catalog card number: 62-6712/MN

SACRED MUSIC is indexed in the Catholic Periodical and Literature Index, Music Index, Music Article Guide, and Arts and Humanities Index.

Cover: The Assumption Mosaic, Basilica Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington D.C.

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ISSN: 0036-2255

SACRED MUSIC (ISSN 0036-2255) is published quarterly for \$30.00 per year by the Church Music Association of America, 134 Christendom Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630-5103. Periodicals postage paid at Saint Paul, Minnesota.
Postmaster: Send address changes to SACRED MUSIC, P.O. Box 960, Front Royal, VA 22630.



Monastery Church, Akhtamar
Byzantine. 915—921

EDITORIAL

After the publication last year of the Holy Father's November 22nd chirograph celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Pius X's sacred music *motu proprio*, an attempt to undermine it came to our attention. Given the state of the Church this, sadly, was not surprising. What was surprising was the man behind the article—Mons. Giuseppe Liberto, Director of the Sistine Chapel Choir. This article was actually a transcript of a short address given on the occasion of the release to the press of the collection *Spiritus et sponsa* and printed in the May 12th English language edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*. Entitled "Music must express the Mystery it celebrates," it sounds innocuous enough but, while ostensibly about the papal chirograph—which is printed in *Spiritus et sponsa*—the address consists largely of the author's own opinions.

And what are these opinions? One of them seems to be that there isn't (or shouldn't be) such a thing as a *treasury* of sacred music in the Roman Rite. One finds such phrases as, "the goal of liturgical music is not so much to produce and perform a musical opus as an end in itself . . ." and "[m]usic and song are living realities and not a codified repertoire to be performed passively and automatically." However, the clincher is, "[I]turgical music has undoubtedly come a long way in the past 40 years: after centuries of ritual rigidity and crystallized musical forms . . ." One is left scratching one's head. Is the only way to perform a codified repertoire "passively and automatically"? Must it be

EDITORIAL

“crystallized”? One doubts most classical music lovers would agree. But speaking of liturgical music specifically, what truly Catholic lover of Gregorian chant thinks it is more important than Christ himself?—certainly not Pope Pius X or Pope John Paul II.

The rest of the address consists of jargon-like phrases (“actuate prophetically,” “new musical forms with a functional and dynamic vision”), and a rather mystical view of the post-Vatican II liturgical reform that would seem to preclude even a reform of the reform (“our obligation not to consider the liturgical reform an event of the past”).

What is most notable about this article is that—if you have already read the Papal chirograph—it is clear that the article has little to do with it. It is what is today in politics called “spin.” The papal chirograph speaks of “the treasury of sacred music” (art. 2), of the importance of preserving and increasing it (art. 8), of Gregorian chant as “the song proper to the Roman liturgy.” (art. 7). One does not find the jargon-like language of Mons. Liberto’s address or the seeming disdain for the treasury of sacred music. One finds quotations from Vatican II, Pius X’s 1903 *motu proprio*, references to Pope Pius XII’s *Mediator Dei* and *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina* and even to Pope Benedict XIV’s 1749 encyclical *Annus Qui!* How very politically incorrect.

Why do we get no inkling of this in Mons. Liberto’s address? Why does he not even mention Gregorian chant? It seems that there continues to exist a battle within the Church—on many things, to be sure—but in this case over the liturgy and liturgical music. Those who lost at Vatican II continue to fight to overturn Chapter VI of the liturgy constitution and, in this case, the papal chirograph that fairly strongly reaffirmed it (as well as Pius X’s 1903 *motu proprio*). In short, the Church’s musical heritage, which was reaffirmed on paper—if in few other places—is still not a welcome guest in the liturgical thought of many even in the highest echelons of the Church.

When people ask why we still have liturgical abuses, or why the Pope doesn’t permit a Universal Indult for the Tridentine Mass, or why *Redemptionis Sacramentum* took so long and was watered down, they have to understand. There is disagreement even on the highest levels of the Church. Until this is cleared up, only minimal progress—on the universal level—will be made in restoring a sense of the sacred in the liturgy. We can still, however, make progress on the local level and is out of this fertile soil that will come future laity, nuns, priests and bishops who will have a yearning for the sacred and a thirst for the Church’s musical heritage.

SACRED MUSIC

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*Interior, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome
Early Christian, 432—440 A.D. Later Alterations*

WHY SACRED MUSIC MATTERS

In his General Audience of February 26, 2003, Pope John Paul II reminds us that “one must pray to God not only with theologically precise formulas, but also in a beautiful and dignified way.” For this reason, he said, “the Christian community must make an examination of conscience so that the beauty of music and song will return increasingly to the liturgy.”¹

Implicit in his remarks is the decades-old reality that in most parishes, the predominate musical forms employed in Roman Rite worship are based on popular and commercial stylings, while the treasury of sacred music (for the Roman Rite, this means Gregorian chant and its stylistic descendents, including the polyphonic and sacred hymnody traditions) has almost completely disappeared.² At this late date, this sad situation prevails by inertia rather than by choice. What is missing is the will to make a change. This too often stems from a lack of understanding of how dramatically chant can positively affect the life of a parish and how uncomplicated it can be to bring about a reform that can yield immense pastoral benefits. These benefits are not only available for older Catholics but for people of all ages, and not just for those with a taste for “high” liturgical expression but even for those who desire music with a broad appeal. The reason the chant, Latin-hymn repertoire, and polyphony proved enduring for so many centuries is because of their universal (meaning beyond contemporary fashion and geography) message and reach. These forms are thoroughly in need of parish revival today, not only because this is great music but also for the good of the faith.

To begin the process of reform, however, lay activism is essential,³ as are efforts by the Holy See, the episcopal conferences, and diocesan Bishops.⁴ It is critical too, however, that parish pastors of souls understand the difference between the sacred and profane in music, and how the choice in favor of the sacred provides pastoral benefits for the believing community. It is they who exercise the most direct influence over the parish

liturgy, and yet so often regard themselves as unprepared for the task. As a 1995 letter on music in liturgy signed by many prominent Catholic musicians and clergy confirmed: "the leadership of the parish clergy is the single most influential factor in the liturgical-musical life of the church; yet the formation of most seminarians in this area remains seriously inadequate. The experience provided in seminaries and seminary chapels forms the attitudes and musical values of future priests, often for the remainder of their ministry."⁵ Thus a new intellectual process of understanding the merit of sacred music is a necessary precondition to providing guidance and support for liturgical renewal. So long as a pastor's thinking on liturgical music is unfocused, and so long as there are no clear directives from Bishops, or uncontested practical guidelines available, the merit of sacred music will lie beyond the grasp of those who should in fact be concerned with it to the utmost degree, those whose great privilege it is to stand in for Christ in the ongoing reenactment of the sacrifice.

As part of the examination of conscience, what follows is less a critique of "what we have done" than a reflection on "what we have failed to do," in the context of delineating the specific *pastoral benefits* that are obtained from a greater focus on sacred music. It is an attempt to draw attention to the contribution that chant and the Catholic sacred-music tradition can make to people's sense of the faith and to parish culture. By highlighting a number of extra-musical issues that are affected by music itself, we hope that pastors will come to a deeper understanding of how profoundly important it is for them to provide guidance to parish musicians in this area and to their congregations generally. To the same degree that quality sacred music makes a contribution in the ways explained below, other music (including popular religious music) at the liturgy will mean missed opportunities for all of these blessings to be enjoyed.

Without arguing the point, chant and traditional polyphony are here considered the model and ideal of what constitutes "sacred music" because they perfectly participate in the general scope of the liturgy, contribute to the decorum and splendor of ceremony, clothe and add greater efficacy to the liturgical text, and possess "the qualities proper to the liturgy, and in particular sanctity and goodness of form, which will spontaneously produce the final quality of universality."⁶ It is of course true that the Church is not limited to a particular style of music,⁷ but proper development is impossible without a foundation in this tradition. Pastors need to know that such sacred music can bring to a parish a changed culture, in ways that put into practice John Paul II's own discussion and delineation of the cultural meaning of sacred art.

I. Reverence: "Art has a unique capacity to take one or other facet of the message and translate it into colors, shapes and sounds which nourish the intuition of those who look or listen. It does so without emptying the message itself of its transcendent value and its aura of mystery."⁸

For good or ill, music shapes the way people experience the liturgy, and hence it has a major influence on the Catholic faithful's primary religious experience, which is weekly Mass. The primary purpose of Mass is not merely to gather the faithful in a community to praise God but to approach God through community prayer within a sacred space in which transcendent mysteries take place. For this reason alone, liturgical music must have a distinctive voice, as identifiably different and distinct from that of the rest of culture as Church doctrine is from secular claims on the origin, meaning, and end of life itself. Countless writings of theologians and popes on music have emphasized that the music in liturgy should not depart from sacramental understanding but rather reinforce it.⁹

The fundamental visible distinction between liturgical and non-liturgical expression is reverence reflecting an awareness of place and purpose. As John Cardinal Newsman said, "To believe, and not to revere, to worship familiarly, and at one's ease, is an anomaly and a prodigy unknown even to false religions, to say nothing of the true one."¹⁰ Reverence comes through in architecture, rubrics, vestments, posture, tone of the spo-

ken, and also, and most compellingly, through the music heard at liturgical occasions. Irreverent music can shatter the decorum of a space even when every other factor is in place. The spiritual import of the most carefully rendered rubrics, the most beautifully placed furnishings, and the most sincerely spoken prayers, can be blotted out by music that draws the aesthetic attention to commonplace instead of sacred matter.

It is often objected that there is no reason for too much focus on music because, after all, it is external to the rite itself. While it is true that the Mass is the Mass, imparting the same grace, regardless of its aesthetic vessel, the vessel itself profoundly affects the way the Mass is understood and received at the intellectual and emotional level to which music speaks most intensely. The liturgy itself demands the best possible presentation to convey its truth; a poor presentation can skew its purposes and impart barriers to understanding and proper experience. In addition, music is external to the rite only in the most abstract and intellectual sense. For good reason, the Church has carefully guarded and guided the development and shape of liturgical music for twenty centuries—from the first Papal statements from A.D.70¹¹ until the present day. It is the sung prayer of the Church and essential to the life of the faith. “Sacred music as an integral part of the solemn liturgy,” wrote Pius X in *Tra Le Sollecitudini*, “shares in its general purpose, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.”¹²

If the Church has guarded and guided music so carefully for so long, a parish pastor must reflect that sense of responsibility by personal dedication to the issue, and not merely delegate music to others. The question every pastor needs to ask is whether the liturgies at his church are indeed clothed in splendor, so that the music moves people to devotion. More likely, the music that serves as the staple repertoire of the parish is disconnected from the whole range of Catholic tradition. Rather, its feel is commercial, theatrical, popular—what once used to be called the profane style. In the best case, music at the liturgy qualifies as only one of the four types of sacred music mentioned in *Musicum Sacrum* (1967): “sacred popular music, be it liturgical or simply religious,” while the other three types—chant, polyphony, sacred instrumental—are woefully neglected.¹³

The problem is not merely one of old versus new. Contemporary music can be fitting at Mass, of course, not even Pius X, who has the reputation of believing only in Chant and its polyphonic offshoots belongs at Mass, forbid modern compositions provided that they are “of such excellence, sobriety, and gravity that they are in no way unworthy of the liturgical functions.”¹⁴ At the same time, it is undeniable that the external form of most new music for liturgy lacks excellence, sobriety, and gravity. Pius X’s comments to this effect long before the world, much less Catholics at Mass, had heard anything resembling a rock beat. How much more so in our own in which the hegemony of popular music over the culture has become impossible to ignore?

Some might regard chant and polyphony as fine for casual listening in the home or in the rectory but not for parish liturgies, which these days require more popular expression. Chant and polyphony, in this view, are meritorious but only suitable for “high” musical tastes or private musical enjoyment. This view is incorrect in treating the music itself as somehow separate or isolated from the Mass. “If the Catholic liturgy is in reality an act of Christ and of the whole Church,” wrote Dominic Johner, “the liturgical chant can only fulfill its object entirely when it is connected as closely as possible with this act, when it interprets the various texts in a accordance with the thoughts and sentiments that move Christ and the Church in their united action and embodies them in a tone-picture.”¹⁵

The renewal of reverential music in liturgy need not occur all in one day, nor need it be all encompassing. Perhaps a parish offers two to six Masses valid to fulfilling Sunday attendance requirements. Is at least one of those devoted to providing a setting that meets of the pastoral needs of those who desire reverence? One might be set aside as a time to begin a new experiment in Latin song and chant, and this one liturgy might begin to draw people into a new understanding of what to expect at Mass. There are

singers and musicians in the parish who might be willing to assist in learning the traditional repertoire. These people, among whom may be the youth of the parish, can be cultivated and encouraged to learn this music, slowly and systematically, as a way of putting on display a different sensibility, of putting decorum, sanctity, and reverence at the center of liturgical action.

II. Prayer: "Humanity in every age, and even today, looks to works of art to shed light upon its path and its destiny."

If a liturgy does not make prayer possible, both facilitating and encouraging it, it has failed in its primary mission. Herein is the profound difference between a "worship gathering," however edifying it may be, and a liturgy: the former is at best a coming together of people for purposes of praising God, whereas the latter is itself a form of community prayer to God, and from God to the community, in order to accomplish the bringing together of temporal and eternal realms. The sense of the prayerful mission of the liturgy can be reflected in the music, just as a prayerful atmosphere can be easily broken by music that sounds, in its externals, too much like the secular style one hears outside the parish walls. Instead of drawing attention to the sacrifice, secular and commercialized sounds lead to mundane focus on people and personalities. For the group that desires a prayerful setting, secular music (even when based on religious texts) distracts and gives rise to division and even animosity; for the group that wants bubbly enthusiasm and thus appreciate popular sounds, this music feeds a confusion over the purpose of liturgy itself. In contrast, writes Denis Crouan, "When the liturgy is correctly performed according to the rites that have been tested by tradition and therefore recognized by the Church, it allows the individual to structure himself: it shows him his true place by giving him at one and the same time both his status as an individual and his social status; it protects him from possible pathological components of the group into which he has integrated himself in order to participate in divine praise; it channels and controls the current that carries the member of the faithful into the presence of spiritual realities."¹⁶

Songs like the Gloria, the Sanctus, or Agnus Dei are not only works of music; they are also works of theology and of prayer. Their delivery should not be the same as tunes on the radio but rather more straightforwardly as a reflection of the community's spiritual convictions, coming from God and sung for God. If sung properly, they should not employ tropes from popular music, not swoops of notes, affectations of sentiment, or even excessive vibrato that calls attention to the singer. Music lacking in these elements, but possessing instead a purity of sound and simplicity of expression, is especially striking to the modern ear. It is a signal that a person is experiencing something very different from the routines of domestic and professional life, something with a beauty that meets a special human need for liturgical expression.

For this reason among many, in both Jewish and Christian traditions, chant has been the normal medium for the proclamation of Holy Scripture¹⁷ and of the liturgy. If the Mass itself is a prayer, and not just a pedagogical tool or an occasion of community praise, the music that is part of the Mass is also a prayer, what Marc-Daniel Kirby calls a "sung prayer" that is "woven into the very fabric of the liturgy."¹⁸ It refers to and reveals the mysteries taking place on the altar and has a profound influence on the spiritual life of the community of worshippers.

Chant is also its own special kind of sacred art. As music, it ought to be sung with affection and attention to beauty. It should not be drained of its aesthetic component, much less its spiritual intensity. If it is done with too much sternness, it can sound tedious and dreary and not reflect a wide range of emotion inherent in the form. As prayer, however, there is no need for an emphasis of virtuoso performance or drama in chant. The singers themselves need only to be comfortable with the medium and language, be relaxed in posture, and meditative in spirit, an effect that is achieved with time and repetition. And just as with prayer, in which stillness and silence can communicate as ef-

fectively as the spoken word, the chant tradition employs silence between phrases, verses, and parts of the Mass. As Katharine Le Mee comments, "during the singing, time seems to stop and the darting mind falls still and attentive, arrested from its worldly concerns and preoccupations."¹⁹

In an address dedicating the new pipe organ at St. Peter's in 1962, Pope John XXIII cited St. Augustine from *Confessions* (Book 9, chapter 6): "What tears were shed, as I felt myself embracing the heart of the sweet melody of the hymns and canticles that re-echo in Thy Church! What psalm-melodies entered my ears, and truth poured itself into my heart and stirred up the flame of affection, and I wept with consolation."²⁰ With a timeless form of musical prayer like chant, what was true in the 4th century can also be true today.

III. Transcendence: "Beauty is a key to the mystery and a call to transcendence."

A good question to ask of all music heard at the liturgy is this: does it work toward the sacramental end of the liturgy to reach outside the bounds of time and strive to enter into eternity? While that might appear an unfair burden to place on any art form, consider the astonishing reality and mystery of what takes place on the Altar. The very sacrifice of Christ on the cross is renewed and made present by virtue of words spoken by the celebrant in the liturgy. To accomplish such an act in time requires that the bounds of time and space are transcended, a claim that is itself singularly radical in an age of rampant skepticism.

Considering this, it is not much to ask that music at the liturgy not overtly draw from external forms that have nothing whatever to do with such transcendent concerns. The chant and the sacred-music tradition, in contrast, grew up around a profoundly secure faith, a faith that in our age is believed to be impossible. To employ this music at Mass, then, expresses a confidence in these timeless claims, and illustrates them in ways that work through the senses to provide evidence of things unseen. There is something inexpressibly calming about the sole employment of the human voice, the absence of meter and sharp edges, that comes with the use of chant; it causes time and space to recede and contemplation of transcendence to displace earthly concerns. Through liturgical music, we hear the sacred so that we can more fully believe in the reality of sacred things.

To explain the primacy of the sacred over the profane in Christian liturgy, Cardinal Ratzinger looks to Isaiah's dream of the temple and the Apocalyptic vision. When the Temple was destroyed, and with it God's dwelling place on earth, what was left the Jews in the synagogue was a lay worship service composed primarily of scripture reading. With the crucifixion, however, when the veil of the new Temple was torn in two, it was made clear that God's glory would no longer reside in the Temple, but rather in Christ and in heaven, where He and His Church gather.²¹

Expressed liturgically, this points to the necessity of a celebration consisting not merely of scripture reading, but a mode of worship without evidence of the everyday, the commonplace, or the profane, but of angelic singing and praise, the whole of the cosmos now being the dwelling place of God's glory. Proper Christian worship must resound with all of the glory and transcendence of the cosmos. Sixteenth-century composer Orlando di Lasso, in describing the origins of chant and sacred polyphony and their respective structures writes: "These musical songs were composed in imitation of that wonderful celestial harmony which no human ear has ever heard, apart from the Apostles." Orlando di Lasso and other composers of his time maintained that God must have used measurements and numbers to create the universe, and they were fascinated (as was St. Augustine²²) with idea that this sacred order can indwell harmony on earth, and in so doing become audible evidence of the Divine.

In the Christian ideal, the human person, as the microcosm of the macrocosm that is the universe, can participate in this harmony, through the use of numbers and measurement in sound. Music is most Christian, then, when it reflects the order of the cosmos

through sound. When we, in the liturgy, participate by singing or listening to a piece of chant or polyphony, we acknowledge and submit ourselves to this higher order, and recognize instinctively the source of the music's inspiration: the Divine presence in our midst.²³

IV. History: "The artistic heritage built up over the centuries includes a vast array of sacred works of great inspiration, which still today leave the observer full of admiration."

Music used in parishes today have little to connect them to Catholic practice before 1970, a fact which belies the Catholic impulse to worship in harmony with a long tradition. Not everyone is pleased by this, so it is common to speak of the great battles over music as between those who favor "contemporary" music and those who favor "traditional" music. But these categories no longer work to fully articulate the issue. When one refers to "traditional" Catholic music to anyone under the age of 40, he or she is likely to remember the music of childhood, which is not "Agnus Dei" and "Ubi Caritas," but Mass parts written by the St. Louis Jesuits and songs like "One Bread, One Body." In the same way, there is little justification for calling music written thirty years ago, in a style that has long fallen out of current popular usage and sounds increasingly anachronistic, "contemporary."

As a point for explaining the merit of chant, neither does the word traditional capture the essence of the genre. So much time has passed since the time when Catholics sang the music of its extended heritage that the tradition has, in a sense, been broken to the point that the music must overcome the burden of unfamiliarity. Nonetheless, there is a special appeal to singing the same songs as a thousand plus years of saints and martyrs. Chant not only connects generations in song; it links together the entire "democracy of the dead" (G.K. Chesterton's phrase) stretching back through Catholic history.

Does a new rite call for all new music? That is a common impression. But positing such a sharp break between old and new sacred art denies people the opportunity to sing and pray in a voice integrated with the whole history of the church. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* envisions no such split: "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 a combination of sacred music and words, it forms a necessary or integral part of solemn liturgy."²⁴ Moreover, there is no evidence that even the architects of the new rite intended that this music be displaced. Annibale Bugnini, in his own contemporaneous account of the reform, insists that his reform "must not, however, lead to forgetfulness of the treasures of the past and, in particular, of Gregorian chant."²⁵ "Sacrosantum Concilium" (1963) could not have been plainer concerning directives for reform: "The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy; there, 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...." The same instruction is repeated in the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, though it is widely ignored.

Ours is not the first time that good music has been displaced by music of lesser value. Bad music in liturgy has a history too.²⁶ In the 12th century, for example, the Bishop of Chartres complained that much singing in church was "full of ostentation." "Such is the facility of running up and down the scale," he wrote "the ears lose their power of judging."²⁷ In the same period St. Aelred, a Cistercian abbot in England, described in detail the alarming developments of the period. "To what purpose is that terrible blowing of bellows, imitating rather the crash of thunder than the sweetness of the human voice?" "Sometimes, and I write it with shame" the singing "is forced into the whinnying of a horse" and even "imitates the agonies of the dying."²⁸

Secular texts were inserted, many times in the vernacular, and secular tunes employed. Pope John XXII, ruling from Avignon, attempted to put a stop to all this with his papal bull *Docta Sanctorum Patrum*. He criticized composers who know "nothing of the true foundation upon which they must build... the mere number of the notes, in these

compositions, conceal from us the plain-chant melody, with its simple, well-regulated rises and falls... These musicians run without pausing, they intoxicate the ear without satisfying it, they dramatize the text with gestures and, instead of promoting devotion, they prevent it." He said that new music was fine so long as it kept within the framework of tradition, but legislated "to prohibit, cast out, and banish" music that departed too far from the purity of the chant.²⁹

Such acts of authority may or may not be welcome today, but there is a need to provide leadership toward a solemn option that connects with the full range of Catholic liturgical history of the best and highest sort, that keeps alive the songs that have built the faith over two millennia and can rekindle a love for faith and history today. As John XXIII said, "it will always be a sacred duty to raise the royal scepter of Latin and make its noble reign prevail in the solemn liturgy, whether in the most illustrious basilica or in the humble country church."³⁰ To be Catholic is to be rooted in the sweep of a grand tradition; music can and should be provided that reminds the faithful that they are part of something much larger than themselves and more extended than the range of their own lifetimes.

V. Humility: "Artists...must labor without allowing themselves to be driven by the search for empty glory or the craving for cheap popularity, and still less by the calculation of some possible profit for themselves."

Sacred music dissolves the ubiquitous problem of liturgical performers who are involved for their own ego; it submerges the self into the divine. It is not likely that musicians will easily embrace this change, so accustomed are they to being at the center or near the center of attention. Once their attention is directed toward the chant tradition, however, that sense must and will begin to change. As Mee comments, "The singing demands total presence of mind, total absence of self-concern, total obedience to the divine will as revealed in the exigencies of the music."³¹

There is some history of another sort that is instructive in both highlighting the problem and in giving direction for change. In the thick of reforming the liturgy after the Second Vatican Council, Bugnini wrote in his personal memoirs of his astonishment at the recalcitrant attitude of the musicians in Rome. They were implacably resistant to the reforms, in a way in which Bugnini did not anticipate.³²

Whereas Bugnini faced a recalcitrant music establishment heavily attached to a repertoire of chant and high renaissance polyphony, and unwilling to consider new methods and songs, the modern pastor confronts a situation not that different. Every parish has its own small music establishment, people appointed by themselves or others to be guardians of the parish's way of doing music. They resist any attempt to introduce new ideas, particularly those involving the radically unfamiliar, of which even simple chant qualifies. The use of music liturgy has remained unsettled area, in parish after parish for many decades now, in part because pastors are too often unwilling or unsure of how to confront the issue and provide the necessary leadership, emphasizing the importance of humility and not performance when art is brought to the liturgy.

Church musicians are passionate about their craft, politically savvy, and, as much or more than anyone, have a strong investment in the manner in which the liturgy is carried out. They believe that they have expertise and requisite skill that sets them apart from others. They have usually outlasted any single pastoral tenure, and work under the assumption that they will outlast whoever happens to be the current cleric or clerical team ostensibly in charge. They have deep roots in parish life and believe that whatever way they have done things is the way it ought to continue to be. Whether they are knowledgeable or ignorant depends on the circumstances of time and place, but their passion for seeing that liturgical matters are conducted a certain way cannot be denied.

To mention only one of many particular issues that is a common problem in this regard: the failure of the contemporary music team to understand the primacy of the human voice (not the organ, and certainly not the guitar or electric piano) in the liturgy

(on grounds of theology, history, and church teaching).³³ The point was made by "*Tra le sollecitudini*": within the context of permitting the organ, the document reinforces the view that "the proper music of the Church is vocal." The long controversy about permitting accompaniment in liturgy was reviewed by Pope Benedict XIV in *Annus Qui* (1749) with the conclusion that voice must always be primary and instruments only allowed insofar as they do not depart from the spiritual sensibility of the liturgy. Even the 1982 US Bishops letter "Liturgical Music Today," in the context of building a case for instruments, also acknowledges that "the liturgy prefers song to instrumental music" (par. 56).³⁴

And yet the keyboardist, as well as many of the faithful in the pews, for that matter, are often under the impression that he or she constitutes the music itself, or that organ accompaniment is the sole reason people sing and that a cappella singing is to be avoided as an inferior mode, a last resort, a stand in for when the keyboardist returns. Singers absorb this feeling of inferiority and do not develop the ability to reach within themselves for notes and song; nor do the faithful come to understand the importance of their role in liturgy so long as their singing is drowned out by loud instruments.

The problem of recalcitrant musicians is heightened by the prevailing view of the high place that liturgical committees and their musical affiliates play in the planning of liturgies. Liturgical trends over the last several decades have encouraged not a musical submission to the liturgical structure but rather a belief that the liturgy is intended to be manipulated and formed by such people as guitar, organ, and piano players, and the cantors they have trained. The publications of music publishers reinforce this view among musicians, flattering them into believing that they, and not the actions on the altar, are the most important reason people come to Mass. They are accustomed to enjoying the freedom to make announcements at Mass, greeting the faithful with encouraging words, attempting new strategies to get people to sing, and otherwise heightening their status with various interventions, spoken and sung.

The first reaction of many parish musicians unused to sacred music is to regard any reform toward it as an imposition, an attempt to push one person's personal agenda at the expense of settled parish practices. It should be emphasized that there can be more than one kind of music in parish life: not every mass needs to be dominated by contemporary standards and not every Mass needs to include chant and/or polyphony. But what is required is that there is some consistency within the individual Mass, and not hodgepodge attempts to appeal to many different tastes within a single liturgy. Church musicians need to develop the humility required to defer to the liturgical structure as it exists in its unified voice, not attempt to turn it into a palate for musical experimentation. If younger members in the parish sincerely wish to have a guitar mass, there may be prudential reasons to permit this to continue so long as solemn options are available. Just as it would be musically and liturgically inconsistent to impose a piece of chant or polyphony on this sensibility, it is equally inappropriate and lacking in stylistic integrity to require that "Eagle's Wings" be sung as an offertory following an earlier Latin Gloria.

It is wrong to assume that including music of different styles and sensibilities will increase unity and spirituality in the parish. From a practical or "functional" standpoint, it must be remembered that parishioners typically attend one Mass to fill their Sunday obligation, and the idea that a wide range of musical choices should be presented within one Mass and at each of the Masses celebrated on that same day will provide the parish with this sense of unity is ludicrous. What is critical here is that the individual attending Mass experience a sense of unity within the Liturgy he is attending. Moreover, combining elements in patchwork-quilt fashion does nothing to point toward the spiritual reality of heaven on earth that is the Mass. Combining elements of widely disparate sensibilities is jarring at best, be they Gregorian chant heard side by side with rock-and-roll inspired hymns, or a nobly decorated golden chalice held up at the elevation, fol-

lowed only by whicker baskets holding the body of our Lord being passed around during communion.

In order to fully understand the mystery playing out before the community, it is essential that all earthly elements which form components of the Mass achieve a harmony amongst themselves, so that the whole harmony and beauty of the Mass may become a window to the eternity that is truly present. Anything less only leads to confusion, and an eventual decline in the sense of the sacred, not only for the individual but for parish and the church at large. The GIRM states that “all elements...should...form a deep and organic unity,” about which Dennis Croun comments: “The real beauty that belongs to the liturgy and that proceeds necessarily from having an educated sense of the sacred should be perceptible through our rejection of...whatever is casual and disparate, and whatever risks appearing unbalanced, whether this be the result of omission or excess.” Concerning the modern tendency to combine elements of disparate styles and substance within a liturgical context, Croun doesn’t mince words: “Bad taste manifests itself... in the way the liturgical actors behave and move, in the gap that is often noticeable between the ritual gesture to be performed and the words that accompany it, and in the way in which elements that are not in harmony with one another are jumbled together.”³⁵

What if the music director is resistant to the change? If the pastor cannot be persuasive using theological arguments, he should relate the practical and pastoral benefits of solemnity. There is a community within every parish that desires reform, and their needs should not be forever forced to yield to others. The pastor should not let the suggestion that lack of resources or personnel might prevent this from becoming a reality. Chant can be learned by everyone, choir and the assembly alike. Traditional hymnody, sung consistently and with reverence once a month is better than none at all. In time, refreshed and renewed with the sense of prayer and genuine spirituality inspired by chant, parishioners themselves will be asking for more, at which point the pastor will have ever more reason to invoke the growing liturgical sense among the parishioners who desire this change.

The music itself will gain converts: there is a special draw to music such as chant that suggests a humble dethronement of the performer or the composer and instead exalts the sacred and the divine. The pent-up demand for this music and the solemnity it brings is underestimated. However, there will always be those who find the music too unfamiliar to understand it or who regard it as depressing and dreary as compared with the upbeat music usually heard in parishes. But this is often a short-term reaction that comes with not having developed the habit of prayer and contemplation at liturgy.

Over time and with enough experience and participation, the habit of humbly approaching the rite as a means of experiencing the sacred will grow. Just as the generation of Vatican II was asked to learn new music for a new time, our times too call on us to learn approaches that are rooted in tradition but new to us today, and thereby adjust our aesthetic expectations in light of this “examination of conscience.” Just as Catholic musical sensibilities were completely (and regrettably) reshaped in the course of only a few years following the close of the Council, pastoral efforts toward a renewal of chant and polyphony can become an essential part of Catholic life again in a surprisingly short period of time.

VI. Community Participation. “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.”

Sacred music permits the faithful actively to perform liturgical actions together, whether by joining in the chant, or by mental participation as a schola cantorum leads the faithful as sung prayer is offered to God. In contrast to other gimmicks designed to achieve community, which (like hand holding or forced greetings) can violate people’s sense of personal space, chant truly involves everyone in song. Again, there may be ide-

ologues in the pews who resent chant but a far more likely scenario is that many parishioners are tacitly confused, even if they don't often think about it very much, concerning why the chant and Latin became something that Catholics do not use. In this case, to employ it, if only as a means of providing something different from the usual fare in a way that lifts the hearts of older parishioners and those who have affection for the music, becomes a pastoral necessity.

A more serious problem than repertoire involves entrenched assumptions about what should take place at liturgy. The musicians who specialize in this music have come to believe that the primary purpose of music at Mass is not to assist in the realization of a solemn setting for a Holy Sacrifice but rather to get people involved in a celebration that brightens people's spirits and involves people in each other's lives. (Quite often, of course, it does the opposite. Much contemporary music is hard to sing, with difficult rhythms that vary in each verse and require expansive ranges that tax unmusical voices.) Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger is surely correct that "the controversy about church music has become symptomatic for the deep question about what liturgical worship is."³⁶

To retrain musicians in a new understanding of how the liturgy should look, sound, and feel, and what emotions musicians should be seeking to elicit from the faithful, requires deliberation and determination, not passivity but an active role in musical catechesis. They need to understand that music at the liturgy has nothing to do with performance and nothing to do with performers. It must be an integral part of the liturgical sensibility and not draw attention to itself. It should never inspire the desire to applaud. The best way to catechize musicians is simply to permit them to familiarize themselves with the chant tradition, and see how it works in a practical way in Mass. They will eventually readjust to the new sense of what is taking place at the Mass and how music should be a part of it.

It is sometimes said that the question of chant "divides" congregations and therefore to employ the music constitutes a divisive act; people's reactions will break down between those who despise it as a throw back to the older church from which they believed they had escape and those who see the music as a glorious restoration of preconciliar sensibilities. Pastors understandably fear igniting such a debate and thus avoid the problem altogether by keeping Latin hymnody at bay. First, if such a divide does exist, there is no *a priori* reason why one side or another ought to have its way against the other. Second, there is nothing at all wrong with healing divides in parishes through offering a diversity of options. Third, and most importantly, this debate and this divide are wholly unnecessary. As much as is possible, any reform toward chant should take place within a depoliticized environment. The chant itself symbolizes not so much restoration as the addition of a new liturgical environment that contributes too much to parish life to be censored and shut off.

Fortunately, the further in time we travel from those contentious years when the vernacular became the norm, the less controversy is associated with recapturing certain lost traditions. Few Catholics under the age of forty will have a fixed memory of having attended a Latin Mass with chant, and hence lack deep passions about the issue either way. The advantage of lacking such experience is that the genre conjures up no particular political baggage and can instead be looked upon with a greater degree of objectivity than was possible decades ago.

The appeal of chant to be far broader than is usually thought, stretching across ethnic, demographic, age, and political boundaries. It is not necessarily the case that the appeal will be limited to nostalgic or "conservative" Catholics. The appeal is for anyone who is open toward change that brings greater decorum, solemnity, and prayer to liturgy. Children, in particular, when provided the opportunity, exhibit an intense interest in learning the basic parts of the Mass and the core Latin hymns of the faith. Through the humble efforts of a Latin children's choir in our parish, adults have been shown that this music is not difficult and appeals to all generations.³⁷

VII. Multiculturalism: “The works of art inspired by Scripture remain a reflection of the unfathomable mystery which engulfs and inhabits the world.”

The Catholic Church includes people from many language traditions. But too often, Sunday liturgy appeals to only one group: middle class Americans with a taste for popular music shaped during formative years in the 1970s. Part of this effect is created by vernacularization, an unfortunate offshoot of which was to divide Catholic parishes by language group. Introducing chant helps bridge some of the gap, making groups from different regions and traditions feel less alienation and more comfortable. Latin chant prevents the liturgy from seeming to appear excessively Americanized. As the GIRM states: “Since faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is fitting that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin...” (no. 41).

The problems with music stemming from the vernacularization of the liturgy are not unique to the Church in America. Parishes world wide are experiencing similar struggles with popular culture forging its way into and taking over. Many Americans might assume that traditional liturgical sensibilities are more likely to be guarded in European countries. And yet Edward Barrett, president of the Association for Latin Liturgy, confirms that “the general picture in Europe as a whole is sadly of uninspired liturgy and little use of Latin in the average parish churches.” The bright spots are bright indeed, but notable by being the exception to the general rule.³⁸

A recent look at liturgies on the parish level in Germany demonstrates the point. On display week after week in a particular Bavarian parish³⁹ are a rotating set of mismatched hymns led not by the choir, but by a religious sister directing from the ambo, the same place she stood to deliver the homily. Placement of the hymns in the liturgy could be described as random at best, and thus disrupting continuity. Understandably, the chaos which ensues weekly in this parish does nothing to heighten the sacramental sensibilities of the liturgy or of that in the souls of those present. Mass attendance in this particular parish is at an all time low, and certainly any out of town visitor who might happen upon this Parish in hopes of meeting the weekly Mass requirement would be hard pressed to recognize anything familiar, anything universal, or moreover, anything sacred in the liturgy.

This kind of irreverence is ubiquitous in Europe, but, as Barrett says, there do exist exceptions where beauty and truth are on display, although these may be difficult to find. A case in point is a small church in the Netherlands, where parishioners come face to face on a regular basis with a Latin ordinary, traditional hymnody, and a well-intended and well-rehearsed schola leading the assembly in sung prayer. Here the sacred is present and answers the need for reverence in the hearts and minds of parishioners and visitors alike.

To be Catholic is to adopt religious sensibilities that transcend the nation-state and even national culture; despite national characteristics, the core of liturgical action should strive for universal expression consistent with the universal invitation to salvation. There is a practical rationale too: a Catholic wants to be able to travel abroad and experience something new at other liturgies (a cultural context, yes) but also something familiar. In addition, in an increasingly globalized culture characterized by world communication, travel, immigration and emigration, and cross-cultural contact, the Catholic liturgy must be in a position to respond to many more needs and expectations than a purely national aesthetic is capable of doing. Latin chant and polyphony holds out that promise of universality of serving as a foundation of musical expression in every parish in the world. That is not to exclude national idioms from liturgies but merely to say that universal expressions of the faith, whether the Credo or Gregorian chant, are crucial to making the Catholic faith live up to its name. In a world of mobility and global integration, universal liturgical expression becomes a pastoral necessity.

VIII. Accessibility. “Gradually the need to contemplate the mystery and to present it explicitly to the simple people led to...Gregorian chant, with its inspired modulations...”

A main myth about chant is that it is inaccessible. Anyone who has attended a workshop on the subject, or consistently experienced a liturgy that includes chant, knows otherwise. Especially by comparison to often tricky “contemporary” music, with its odd intervals and rhythms, chant can be learned with little effort. It is music intended for the human voice alone, and not stylized to fit one instrument or one performer. Any congregation can learn a simple Kyrie in one liturgy. The remaining parts of the ordinary can be absorbed and become the people’s song in the course of a month or two. And though they can be quickly learned, they do not grow tiresome or tedious as can music tied to a specific contemporary context.

Many pastors look at the immense size of the *Liber Usualis*, along with the unfamiliarity of the medieval neumes, and gasp in shock, for the whole project looks forbidding. While this book does represent the full-blown treatment in the old rite, fewer than 20 pages will suffice to introduce dramatic change in any modern parish. As for the neumes, once learned, they are easier to read than modern notation. But modern notation is available as well. Or perhaps pastors worry about the expense of new hymn books. The truth is that they are not necessary. Any parish can put together its own booklet of Latin chant (which is in the public domain). Indeed, there is far too much emphasis on the need for new hymn books. Hymnals do not sing themselves. To instruct musicians of the need for reform and to enliven their sense of responsibility and deference to the rite itself is a far greater priority than spending money. Consider, for example, that the printed page was not available to Catholics in the pew during the first 1600 years of existence, but somehow the songs of the faith lived, thrived, and grew. The same mistake is often made concerning the need to pay musicians to play and sing. A pastor might be better off with volunteers who care about what they are doing than professionals who are often the first to claim that their supposed expertise should trump the will of the Church.

For a New Rite parish just starting out, a few parts from the ordinary will suffice to infuse the liturgy with solemnity—provided the liturgy is not interrupted with injections of popular music in an ill-advised attempted at musical eclecticism. The next step will be to add a Latin hymn as a recessional used week after week (the “Salve Regina” is the ancestral choice). After that, the offertory can employ Latin hymnody. One Latin setting of the ordinary and ten basic Latin hymns, together with traditional vernacular hymns, is more than enough to transform a parish and revive the solemn sense for longer than a year.

Neither should polyphony be neglected, for it provides a corrective to the tendency toward pure functionalism in liturgy and offers complexity of sound to enliven the mysteries of the liturgy. After all, ours is not the first generation to give rise to critics who say that polyphony is an unsuitable distraction. This view was considered and rejected in the middle ages and at the Council of Trent on grounds that the polyphonic tradition represents an organic outgrowth from the foundation of chant itself. While it is true that the people cannot join in singing this music, its existence is an aid to prayer and participation, thus making the *meaning* and spiritual import of the Mass more accessible even to those who cannot understand the text.

As for the Responsorial Psalm, it will likely continue to be in the vernacular except in parishes with the most ambitious leadership. Again, what is important here is not the sheer quantity of Latin chant and sacred music; what matters is the internal aesthetic consistency of the whole liturgical experience. It is probably more important for permitting solemnity to blossom to keep worldly music out than it is to import Latin chant. To achieve that, however, requires decisive leadership from pastors who are willing to be straightforward with parish musicians.

IX. Catechesis: "In order to communicate the message entrusted to her by Christ, the Church needs art."

The songs we walk away with from Mass shape what we believe about the faith and how we think about the faith. If these songs are too easily confused with other cultural messages and signs, the message of the faith can be muddled. This is crucial to remember concerning music used during the liturgy. The finest, most orthodox homily may not be able to overcome the impact of a heterodox hymn with a secular-style melody sung week after week. The pastor may be preaching eternal verities, but so long as a soft-rock band keeps singing about the need to "Sing a New Church into Being," his influence over the spirit of the parish will be blunted. Liturgical music should not crowd out the message of the Gospel but illuminate it and capture it in a way that mere words cannot.

Songs come to us throughout the day even when we do not intend to think of them; they imbed themselves in our imaginations and emerge on the slightest prompting. Catholicism has developed over the ages a very special kind of music that does precisely this. Through the centuries, it has been an essential part of how people think of essential prayers, like the "*Ave Maria*" and the "*Jesu Dulcis*." In little more than two to three generations, that music has fallen silent, and, along with it, the centrality of these prayers to our faith experience. But it can all come back again, in one generation, parish by parish, with only a bit of effort backed by clarity of purpose, and with it, a new sense of seriousness concerning the claims of the Church.

Consider a case of a parish musician who believes that he knows nothing about chant. With only an hour or two a week, and the aid of a recording and chant book, he can master enough of them to teach them to others. After only a few rehearsals, he can have them prepared for the liturgy, and in the course of the training, teach them something about the prayers and language. The next step will be to introduce them to the faithful in the pews, not through intrusive pre-liturgical "rehearsals" (as if a performance were coming) but through consistent use within the liturgy itself. In the course of three months, he will have done far more to achieve the goal than all the expensive architectural changes and new catechetical materials he might be contemplating buying. These days, no pastor need fear this project on grounds that he will be seen as ignorant of Church traditions. The problem is everywhere, and any pastor or parish musician who has the courage to tackle it deserves immense credit.

X. Outreach: "Artists give voice in a way to the universal desire for redemption."

Non-Catholics who have never attended Mass, but know of Catholicism through films and novels, might still be under the impression that chant and polyphony remain the music that one would hear if one came to a Catholic church. These are valid expectations that should not be dismissed. How alarmed they are when they come to Mass and hear for the first time the music that passes for sacred in today's parishes. One can easily see why so many leave gravely disappointed. Even non-Catholics are likely to expect and want solemnity in the liturgy. "So powerful is the appeal of this music to the sentiment of religious awe," writes Marie Pierik, "that many souls have been touched by it to the very depths of their being, even to such an extent that it prepared the way for the lasting conversion and admission into the bosom of the Church."⁴⁰

Neither can pastors afford to ignore the problem of Catholics who have been estranged from the parish by the advent of popular music. The anecdotal evidence is all around us. Many people simply stopped attending Mass once it seemed that the St. Louis Jesuits were exercising a kind of liturgical hegemony. Once the Catholic Church stopped sounding Catholic, it alienated many of its most faithful members. It is quite possible that many of those who have been chased away by secular styles could be attracted back into the fold through a consistent effort to provide a solemn option in every parish. Reviews of sacred music on such sites as Amazon.com confirm widespread longing for this music to be heard in parishes. Fully four decades after the importation

of secular styles in the liturgy, the movement to renew the sacred style is more likely to be perceived as a sincere longing for solemnity rather than a political effort to reverse modernity itself.

To be a Catholic in the modern world, in any case, is already to set oneself apart. To develop a small skill in singing some Latin hymns and prayers is to bond people not only to each other but also to the whole of Catholic history, to transcend history itself, and provide a sense of community identity that is both group-specific and universally inviting. Chant has earned pride of place in the rite; it is the very sound of who we are, what we are doing together. Its appeal to those outside of the fold is quite powerful.

Solemn Liturgy Begins

Pastoral attention to the need for solemn music and a reform toward chant can have an immediate impact on parish life. As people enter the Church, off in the distance, out of sight from where most people sit, a group of singers can chant a simple song, a song without meter, without rush, and with large spaces between phrases and verses. It might be the "Ubi Caritas." This can begin a full ten minutes before Mass. The fragile silence between verses will be interrupted by simple song in a sacred tongue, inspiring those present to internal reflection. People will feel called to stay on their knees in prayer. After a while, the purity of this hymn will no longer seem external to the space at all but integral to it. And when the music stops, it will continue to be felt as if it were a kind of audible incense that envelops and unifies the entire community. The processional can begin without instruments. People in the pews, who have long passively stood as the organ or guitars played, will have a new sense of musical responsibility. If they sing, they can hear themselves, and they can make a contribution. When the Kyrie arrives—a simple setting that can be learned quickly—they will have already adapted to the new sense of responsibility, spiritual introspection, authentic community, and peace. This is the beginning of liturgy for Catholics, the beginning of a glorious journey from time into eternity.

ARLENE OOST-ZINNER AND JEFFREY TUCKER

NOTES

- ¹ John Paul II, General Audience, February 26, 2003, as reported by Zenit (Rome).
- ² As confirmed by Jan Michael Joncas, *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music: Twentieth-Century Understandings of Roman Catholic Worship Music* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1997), p. 113. Joncas is the composer of "On Eagles Wings."
- ³ Oost-Zinner and Tucker, "Bringing Chant and Polyphony to a Small Parish," *Sacred Music*, Summer 2003, Volume 30, Number 2, pp. 5-14.
- ⁴ As discussed in *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, Apostolic Letter on the 25th Anniversary of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1988.
- ⁵ "The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music," Salt Lake City: The Madeleine Institute, 1995.
- ⁶ *Tra Le Sollecitudini, Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X on the Restoration of Church Music, par. 1, *Worship and Liturgy*, edited by James J. Megivern (Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Co., 1978).
- ⁷ As the "Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music" affirmed (Salt Lake City, Madeleine Institute, 1995).
- ⁸ "Letter of his Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists," Easter Sunday, April 4, 1999. The remaining quotations that begin each section are taken from this letter.
- ⁹ Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music: 95AD to 1977AD* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979).
- ¹⁰ John Henry Cardinal Newman, "Reverence in Worship," *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1997 [1891]), p. 1571. "Now is it not plain that those who are thus tired, and wearied, and made impatient by our sacred services below, would most certainly get tired and wearied with heaven above? because there the Cherubim and Seraphim 'rest not day and night,' saying 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.'" p. 1574.
- ¹¹ Pope St. Clement forbade the singing of psalms in pagan festivals. Hayburn, p. 2.
- ¹² *Tra Le Sollecitudini, Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X on the Restoration of Church Music, par. 1, *Worship and Liturgy*, edited by James J. Megivern (Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Co., 1978), p.18. Pius X's encyclical was not only written to guide music in great cathedrals or special events, but rather in parishes of all sizes all over the world. It is directed toward "every local church. . . where the Christian people assemble to receive the grace of the sacraments, to be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, to adore the august Sacrament of the Lord's Body and to join in the common prayer of the church in the public and solemn liturgical offices." "Tra Le Sollecitudini," introduction.
- ¹³ *Musicam Sacram*, Instruction on Music in the Liturgy (1967), par. 4b.
- ¹⁴ *Tra Le Sollecitudini*, par. 5.
- ¹⁵ Dominic Johner, *A New School of Gregorian Chant* (New York: Pustet, 1925), p. 223.
- ¹⁶ Denis Crouan, *The Liturgy after Vatican II*, Ignatius, San Francisco, 2000, p. 70.
- ¹⁷ Marc-Daniel Kirby, O. Cist., "Sung Theology: The Liturgical Chant of the Church," in *Beyond the Prosaic: Renewing the Liturgical Movement*, Stratford Caldecott, ed., (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), p. 132.
- ¹⁸ Kirby, p. 137.
- ¹⁹ Katharine Le Mee, *Chant* (NY: Bell Tower, 1994), p. 122.
- ²⁰ Address on September 26, 1926, cited from Hayburn, pp. 541.
- ²¹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Theological Problems in Church Music," in Robert A. Skeris, ed., *Crux et Cithara: Selected Essays on Liturgy and Sacred Music* (Altötting: Copenrath, 1983), pp. 219-220.
- ²² Catherine Pickstock, "Soul, City, and Cosmos After Augustine," in John Milbank et al., ed., *Radical Orthodoxy* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 243-269.
- ²³ For a discussion of the place of the eternal in Palestrina's music, see Zoe Kendrick Pyne, *Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina: His Life and Times* (London: John Lane, 1922), pp. 173-74.
- ²⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1156.
- ²⁵ Bugnini, p. 216.
- ²⁶ Oost-Zinner and Tucker, "The Uneven History of Church Music," *Catholic World Report*, April 2003.
- ²⁷ Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation Concerning Music: 95AD to 1977AD* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979), p.18.
- ²⁸ Hayburn, p. 19. One author from the mid-14th century (Jacob of Leige) complained that Catholic singers "contrive to sing a little in the modern matter" but instead "they bay like madmen nourished by disorderly and twisted aberrations and use a harmony alien to nature herself."

- ²⁹ Hayburn, p. 20-21.
- ³⁰ John XXIII, letter to Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, February 22, 1962, cited in Hayburn, p. 539.
- ³¹ Katharine Le Mee, *Chant* (N.Y: Bell Tower, 1994), p. 121.
- ³² Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy: 1948-1975* (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1990), p.22.
- ³³ Marie Pierik, *The Spirit of Gregorian Chant* (Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1939), p. 178. "Pure music must only be rendered by sung voices," said Ludwig van Beethoven. Richard Wagner opined that "if Church music is to succeed in arriving once again at its original purity, vocal music alone must represent it."
- ³⁴ This document argues, however, that "the music of today, as indeed musical culture today, regularly presumes that the song is accompanied. This places instruments in a different light. The song achieves much of its vitality from the rhythm and harmony of its accompaniment." It is certainly true that "musical culture" in the *secular* world presumes accompaniment for voices, which was also true in the Middle Ages when the primacy of the human voice for *sacred liturgy* was widely acknowledged.
- ³⁵ Denis Crouan, *The Liturgy after Vatican II*, Ignatius, San Francisco, 2000, p. xx.
- ³⁶ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord* (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1997), p. 112.
- ³⁷ Oost-Zinner and Tucker, "Singing with the Angels," *Latin Mass Magazine*, Fall 2003.
- ³⁸ Editorial, "Laetare Vehementer," Newsletter of the Association for Latin Liturgy, Easter 2002, number 15.
- ³⁹ Attended in 2002 by an author of this article.
- ⁴⁰ Pierik, *Spirit of Gregorian Chant*, p. 162.



*Interior, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome
Early Christian, 432—440 A.D. Later Alterations*

CHILDREN AND CHANT

As the director of a Latin Children's choir, I often sense ambivalence from parents about the project. They are happy to have their children leading parishes back to Catholic tradition, and many want their children to receive a music education that goes beyond the learning of popular tunes. This is all to the good. Their reticence, however, is due to something many of us might have felt at some point: fear of Latin.

Let's face it: none of us is fluent in Latin. Many Catholics, in fact, find it outmoded and intimidating. It is no longer a real part of their daily lives, despite their best intentions and pious inclinations. It inspires fear precisely because of its quiet and elusive power to summon the heavens, not to mention its ability to boost the standardized test scores of anyone who has dared enter into its grammatical abyss. Children's attitudes reflect those of their parents. The complete absence of chant in most parishes only complicates the problem.

Is Latin the only language appropriate for singing in our churches? Not so, says the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. The vernacular is acceptable. Chant and its stylistic descendent polyphony, however, are the only two forms of musical expression identified specifically as appropriate to the Roman Rite, and bishops are charged to see that their tradition is carried forth.

Happily, there is a new wave of children learning Latin in their home schooling classrooms. Compared to this lucky few, many adults may have the feeling that they are being left behind. This attitude must be shed, however, when it comes to singing the chant, and teaching it to our children. The emphasis here is not on the language as a discipline in itself, but on learning and embracing aspects of our tradition in a manner accessible only through the chant.

Much of our experience as Catholics, especially when going into a church, or participating in the liturgy, is dependent on our senses. We touch holy water to remind us of our baptism, we see the red lamp over the tabernacle, reminding us that Christ is really present with us and we genuflect with our whole bodies; we kneel and bow our

heads when we pray. These are all physical markers of who we are as Catholics, and they are aspects of the faith passed down to us over the centuries: part of our sacramental heritage, so to speak.

Parents need to understand that what we hear in a church, and how we respond to it, is much the same. We cannot separate chant from our heritage, nor should attempts be made to separate the language of our heritage from the music. These grew up together, the lines of music having evolved from the texts of Holy Scripture itself, in a manner consistent with what early Christians brought with them from their Jewish, Roman, and Greek traditions.

Children can learn much about the faith through their auditory sense. Just as they see various sights and symbols around the church that tell them exactly where they are, the sound of chant, which cannot be separated from Latin, points to the same.

Ask a child the following: On a spring day, what do you hear outside? Of course he will answer "birds!" Ask him if he speaks bird? Most likely he will laugh, and he may even try to convince you that he speaks warbler. The point is, the sounds of the birds tells him a lot of things: what continent he is on, what time of year it is, who he is in relation to these feathered little friends. The point, of course, is that he doesn't have to understand "birdspeak" in order to learn from it, and for it be meaningful to him.

Do you speak Russian, or French, you might ask? Of course not will be the answer, but you might go on to discuss how when we hear a person speaking in a foreign tongue, though not privy to the details of what he might be saying, we certainly understand his tone: the mood and intent of the sounds being produced.

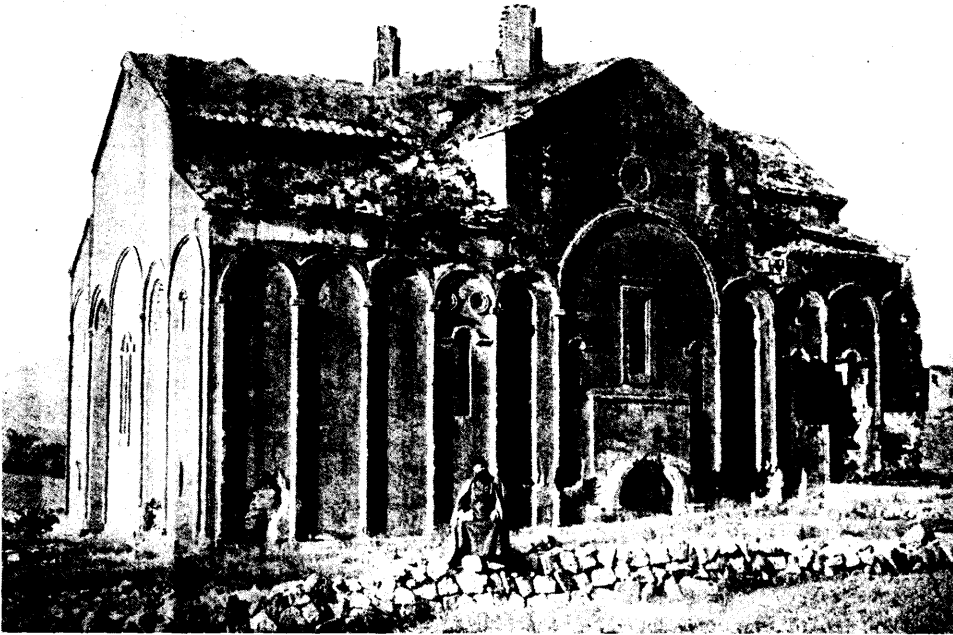
With similar aim, we may ask: How many of us play the piano, and how many of us actually expect to become concert pianists at some point during our lifetime? How many of us studied math, or history, or took swimming lessons as children, and how many of us actually ended up being mathematicians, historians, or Olympic athletes.

Parents begin to understand, and so do the children. No learning is wasted. Singing the chant does not mean all of our children are going to have aspirations of being professional schola directors, or cantors, or opera singers, for goodness sake. Learning the chant does not mean they are going to become poorly paid translators at the United Nations, or linguists writing grammars for nearly extinct languages on remote islands. Learning the chant, however, does tell us where we are, what liturgical season it is, what time of day it is, and most importantly, involves us in the liturgical drama being played out before us.

Singing the chant can become an integral part of a child's faith experience, an indispensable part of his learning who he is as a Catholic. He will recall lines of chant throughout his life, in good times and in bad. It will inform his character, and hopefully point him in the right direction should difficulty or temptation come his way.

Again, other forms of musical expression have come to be part of the tradition since Vatican II. No attempt is being made to deny the validity of their inclusion in worship within the appropriate context. But to deprive a child the opportunity of experiencing two thousand years of Catholic tradition in an auditory way, learning the chant, which is inseparable from Latin and the liturgy, is tantamount to asking him not to genuflect whole heartedly before the tabernacle, not to feel hope when watching rays of sun sparkle through a stained glass window, and not to feel humility when looking up at the image of Christ on the Cross.

It is up to parents to see that their children receive a Catholic education. As Catholics, it is up to all of us to see that the two thousand year old tradition is carried forth. Encourage parents to talk to their pastor and music director about getting a Latin choir started in their parish. Better yet, urge them to buy some CDs and a hymnal, or attend a workshop. Parents need to start learning the chant themselves, and teach it to their children. The benefits are inestimable.



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INTERVIEW OF MR. HAROLD UNVERFETH

June 1939 was an exciting time for me. I had just received my Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, and I was organist and choir director at Holy Angels Church in Dayton. By the way, Art McGervey, who was also at the dinner, followed me at Holy Angels while an Engineering student at U.D. After graduation, I was pressed to make up my mind to pursue a career in Business or Church Music. Clifford A. Bennett seemed to have had the career. (Clifford A. Bennett, was at that time organist and choirmaster at Sacred Heart Church, Pittsburgh from 1939 to 1946 and originator, promoter and first president of the Gregorian Institute of America.)

In the beginning, The Gregorian Institute of America was educational, concentrating on Summer Sessions, the first being here at Sacred Heart, August 1939. Because of other commitments I missed the first Session. However, soon afterward, Cliff contacted me in Dayton and I came to Sacred Heart for an audition. He seemed impressed with my background and on September 1, 1939—the day Hitler invaded Poland—I invaded the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Immediately, I drove to Cliff's apartment in the Coronado and met Cliff's wife, and also Francis Schmidt from Covington, Kentucky, who was, at that time, the organist and choirmaster at Assumption Church in Belview, where our dear colleague John Romeri is presently. Also I met the organist and choirmaster at St. Mary's Church, North Side—a Mr. Burkhart. He was in ill health and had to resign his position there. Clifford Bennett made an arrangement that I would take over the music position at St. Mary's. The next day I met with Mr. Burkhart at the church; he introduced me to the Pastor and showed me around the buildings. The following day I began my duties at St. Mary's Church, North Side.

HAROLD UNVERFETH

Clifford Bennett's original idea was to have a Church Music School at Sacred Heart. To begin this he selected four men to take Church Music Courses at Sacred Heart and organ studies at Carnegie Tech. The four men were Bob Brown from Regent Square, Pittsburgh; Paul Lang from Brookline, Pittsburgh; Bill Matthews from Hubbard, Ohio; and Harold Unverfeth from Dayton, Ohio. Later we four men were identified as Charter members of the Gregorian Institute of America.

We charter members studied organ at Carnegie Tech with the head of the organ department, Dr. Kasper Koch—Paul Koch's father, Polyphony with Sister Caecilia—a Charity nun from Seton Hill, and Church Latin, Church Music History, Boy's Choir, Men's Choir and Liturgy with Clifford Bennett.

During the summer of 1949, Cliff drove his Buick Roadmaster 12,000 miles throughout the country, promoting the CCCC—Catholic Choirmasters Correspondence Course.

In September 1941, I was drafted into the army. Pearl Harbor in December of that year brought most of the plans to a halt. In the summer of 1942, Cliff, because of rationing, could no longer get enough gasoline for his car, so he trained for the Civil Aeronautical Patrol, purchased his own airplane, for which the Government provided plenty of gasoline and flew around the country visiting Catholic institutions, promoting the CCCC.

In the meantime, I was at an Army Infantry Replacement Training Center in Georgia working as a Company Clerk. I had use of a typewriter and almost every week I would mail a prepared chapter of the CCCC to a Sister Theophane in Racine, Wisconsin. She would correct and grade my papers and return them to me.

In four years World War II ended, I finished the CCCC and was entitled to a two week Summer Session in Toledo, Ohio. I enjoyed and learned much from the correspondence course. The two weeks in Toledo were a musical and liturgical delight. Clifford Bennett was a witty, super-intelligent, flamboyant man. The final day of the two-week Summer Session in Toledo was highlighted with a Solemn High Mass at the Cathedral. The night before at Marymount Catholic High School, we four charter members were folding the programs for the Graduation Mass, while Cliff was composing and typing the Bishop's speech for the Graduation exercises.

At this time, the Gregorian Institute of America had an extension program with the University of Montreal. I became acquainted with Dr. Eugene Lapierre, the Director of the Conservatory. He helped me set up a series of courses that I needed to secure a degree from the University. I was able to take classes in Pittsburgh, at Carnegie Tech and Pittsburgh Musical Institute. The latter institution is no longer in existence. In the summer of 1948 I met Dr. LaPierre and three other professors in Rochester, N. Y. I played an organ recital and took several days of examinations. Soon after that, I received a Bachelor Degree in Musical Studies from the University of Montreal.

From 1946 into the 1950's, the CCCC flourished with many enrollments. After completing the four year Correspondence Course all would attend a two week Summer Session. To accommodate the students, these Summer Sessions were held in all parts of the United States.

Vatican Council II brought all this to an end and as we know, the Gregorian Institute was moved to Chicago, Illinois. It is now a successful music publishing company.

I would like to finish this story about the early beginnings of the GIA with a few personal remarks. Because of Clifford Bennett, I left my hometown in Dayton. Here in Pittsburgh, I met Doris Doyle who, at that time, was a parishioner at St. Mary's Church on the North Side. She was also the organist at Regina Coeli Church. We were married in 1943 at St. Mary's. We have one daughter and two sons. One of our sons, Nicholas, is here with us tonight as a proud member of the Sacred Heart Choir. Professionally, he is an architect. Doris has held the position of organist at Glenshaw, St. James, Wilkinsburg, where for seventeen years we were a husband and wife team. Naturally, we are happy with what the Gregorian Institute has done for us. Thank you.

REVIEWS

Choral Music Reviews

Advent Introits for Choir and Congregation, by Richard Rice. SATB choir & congregation. Catalog #3121. \$2.95 (1-2 copies) or 1.95 (3 or more copies). CanticaNOVA Publications, PO Box 291, Oakmont, PA 15139-0291. www.canticanova.com

For the choirmaster who is looking for a way to introduce or reintroduce the Propers to their rightful places at Mass, Richard Rice has come up with a useful solution. In his own words he writes that these Introits:

Expand a simpler collection of the complete Proper chants for the Sundays of the Church year...I intended these unrhymed poetic paraphrases to be used with traditional hymn melodies from the *Liber hymnarius*, most of which are in Long Meter (88.88). The idea of a metrical Psalter is a venerable Protestant tradition, but one that I feel could play an essential part in the ongoing liturgical renewal, especially in providing a biblically based and theologically sound alternative to some controversial modern hymns.

If your pastor will not allow it, or if your choir is not skilled enough yet to chant the Propers from the *Graduale Romanum*, or even the *Graduale simplex*; if parishioners would raise an outcry if they don't get to sing an opening hymn, these Introits might be just right. Each of the four Advent Introits consists of the antiphon that can be sung by both choir and congregation (reproducible congregational lines are included) and the psalm verses, to be sung by the choir. The music is very much in the style of classic, four-part hymns, which adds an air of familiarity that should win over many a congregation. No mention is made of the organ or any other accompaniment, so it would seem that these are meant to be sung *a cappella*, though if necessary the organist could always play along. Mr. Rice has also composed a set of Introits for Lent that I would like to see.

SUSAN TREACY

Compact Discs

Sounds of Advent: Veni Emmanuel and Picardy, arranged by Lee Dengler. SAB voices, accompanied. D 5472. \$1.25. Harold Flammer Music, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

The title of this work gives a clue to the composer's method. He begins with the baritones singing the first stanza of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," followed by the first stanza of "Let all mortal flesh," sung by the sopranos and altos. In the third part of the anthem both melodies are combined and a coda quietly ends it. *Sounds of Advent* is a very simple anthem that is well within the reach of any parish choir, and especially for those choirs that lack men's voices. The accompaniment appears to be for piano, but would work on the organ.

S.T.

Sheet Music

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, arranged by Charles Galetar. SATB *a cappella*, with optional keyboard and/or handbells. A 7224. \$1.40. Harold Flammer Music, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

Charles Galetar has included extensive performance notes with this effective setting of *Veni Emmanuel*. He intended it as a "processional or entrance piece." Three hand bells only are used, "to help maintain pitch for the voices" and to represent "the tolling of time." The tintinnabulation of the hand bells are a striking enhancement and do add a sense of awe and mystery. The vocal writing is very simple and there is a solo stanza for unspecified voice accompanied by "voices alone [on "oo"], organ alone, or voices and organ." Indeed, this lovely anthem is the ultimate in practicality, as Galetar also suggests alternatives to the hand bells, for those parishes without them.

S.T.

How Far Is It to Bethlehem, by Geoffrey Shaw. SATB *a cappella*. 29 0310. Price unknown. Novello. Sole Selling Agent in the U.S.A.: Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

Originally composed in 1922, Geoffrey Shaw's setting of Frances Chesterton's touching Christmas poem does not use the triple-meter English carol tune familiar to many people. Instead, Shaw features a brief, minor-mode melody with a distinctive rhythm, reminiscent of a French noel. The choir accompanies the soprano line throughout the three stanzas of the poem, but each stanza features a slightly different accompaniment, and the most interesting harmonies are introduced at the very end. Again, this charming anthem is within the reach of most choirs.

S.T.

The Infant King, Old Basque Noël, harmonized by Desmond Ratcliffe. SATB *a cappella*. 021030. Price unknown. Novello. Sole Selling Agent in the U.S.A.: Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

Desmond Ratcliffe's harmonization is a simple, strophic setting of this beautiful traditional Basque Noël. Choirmasters might want to vary the performance by having one or two stanzas sung as a solo accompanied by humming voices—or use some other means—to prevent monotony.

S.T.

Two A Cappella Carols for Christmas. I. *Before the Paling of the Stars*. II. *The First Christmas Morn*, by Sheldon Curry. SATB *a cappella*. A 7301. \$1.40. Harold Flammer Music, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

These two carols by Sheldon Curry are a new look at a familiar genre. The melodic styles resemble traditional carols but feature some modern, pleasing harmonies. *Before the Paling of the Stars* is a setting of a poem by Christina Rossetti, and is a lullaby. The first stanza is sung by the whole choir, while the second and third stanzas are sung by the men and the women, respectively. Each of the three stanzas is followed by an Alleluia refrain sung by the whole choir.

In *The First Christmas Morn*, a setting of lyrics by Sir Edmund Hamilton Sears, children's voices (if available) are called for at the beginning of the first stanza. This carol has the character of a jolly English carol and the tune is catchy enough for the congregation to remember it later. Both carols are not difficult to sing; choirmasters would do well to add these to their repertoire.

S.T.

Two Carols from "The Nazarene" Christmas. I. *And They Shall Call Him Emmanuel*. SATB and organ, with optional large tam-tam. II. *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks*. SATB and organ, with optional finger cymbals and small tom tom, by Luigi Zaninelli. A 7232. \$1.50. Harold Flammer Music, A Division of Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

Luigi Zaninelli's two carols are from his Christmas cantata, *The Nazarene*. The cover states that the words are from Holy Scripture, but it is fairer to say that they are inspired by Holy Scripture. The first carol is either a paraphrase or a particular translation of Isaiah 7: 13 and Matthew 1: 23, with added Alleluias. The second carol uses the lyrics of Nahum Tate, based on Luke 2: 8-13. Each carol has a sprightly and memorable tune, though the level of choral singing required is somewhat higher than for the other works reviewed here.

S.T.

Two Dialogue Carols: Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine & Maria on the Mountain. SATB and accompaniment, by Jerry De Puit. A 2080. \$1.40. Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Water Gap, PA 18327.

This work uses the traditional German carol tunes *Joseph lieber, Joseph mein* and *Maria auf dem Berge*. The "dialogue" seems to refer to two things. The lyrics of each carol are a dialogue between Joseph and Mary; further, the composer has effected a dialogue between the two carols at a couple of strategic points. The choral parts are relatively easy to sing and, again, although the accompaniment seems designed for the piano, it is possible to adapt it to the organ.

S.T.

NEWS

Assumption Grotto parish in Detroit celebrated the Solemnity of Corpus Christi with appropriate joy and solemnity on Sunday, June 13. The noon Mass was sung in Latin by Fr. Titus Kieninger, ORC. Fr. Eduard Perrone, pastor of Assumption Grotto, conducted the parish choir and orchestra in Gounod's glorious *St. Cecilia Mass*.

The Mass was offered *ad orientem*, at the high altar. There is another, forward altar in the sanctuary, which presumably is fixed. The servers, in white albs with golden shoulder capes, performed their duties with little fidgeting.

The neo-gothic church was filled with a wide cross-section of Catholic Detroit, though most apparent were young families with many children. It is a hopeful sign for the future to see so many young children being exposed to the musical treasures of the Church. I must admit to a certain jealousy, as my childhood liturgical experiences were marked by guitars and bongos, rather than soul-piercing violins, soothing harps and stirring timpani. The proper of the Mass was well chanted by a small schola. The high point for the choir and orchestra was clearly the majestic Credo. Besides Gounod's Mass, Giuseppe Verdi's *Ave Maria* and Schubert's *Totus in Corde Lanqueo* were also featured.

Fr. Kieninger preached on the tremendous gift of the Holy Eucharist, calling it the remedy for contemporary man's search for meaning. Pointing to the tabernacle, he reminded the assembly of Christ's great love and gift of Himself, and called for reverent awe in receiving such a guest.

Despite the length of the Mass and the humidity of a non-air conditioned church, most of the children behaved very well and, following the Mass, nearly the entire congregation stayed to participate in the annual Corpus Christi procession around the parish and cemetery grounds. Four altars were set up outdoors and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was offered at each one, before we returned to the church for the final Benediction. The singing outdoors was spotty, as the length of the procession, the dearth of hymnsheets, and the lack of clear leadership made for a certain amount of chaos. At the altars and when the texts of the hymns were well known, the singing was done with fervent gusto. The devo-

tion of the people to the Blessed Sacrament was apparent from the fact that nearly everyone not hindered by age or infirmity knelt for the Benedictions, heedless of the staining effects of wet grass on the knees of their Sunday best.

The Holy Father, with his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* and in his recent announcement of an upcoming Eucharistic Year, has asked the Church to turn her eyes toward the Eucharist with increased devotion. It seems that one parish in the Detroit area, blessed to have Fr. Perrone as their pastor, is leading the way.

(submitted by Timothy T. Ferguson, canon law student at St. Paul University in Ottawa, and interning for the summer with the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Detroit.)

‡

On Sunday, August 15th, Feast of the Assumption, the Most Reverend Michael A. Saltarelli, Bishop of Dover, Delaware celebrated the indult Tridentine Mass at Holy Cross Church in Dover. Music was provided by the Indult Choir under the direction of our member, Mr. William G. Stoops and the *Te Deum* Singers of Lancaster, Pennsylvania under the direction of another CMAA member, Mr. Philip Crnkovich. As Mr. Stoops will be moving to Virginia, he asks for any qualified candidate interested in taking over this volunteer position of Indult Choir Director to contact him at 804-249-2390 or wgstoops@aol.com.

‡

Mr. William Stoops will also be replacing Mr. Vincent Sly as Treasurer of the CMAA, so from now on all subscriptions, renewals, and inquiries should be sent to him at 12421 New Point Drive, Harbour Cove, Richmond, VA 23233.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jeffrey Tucker and Arlene Oost-Zinner have written extensively on sacred music in such publications as *Crisis* and *Catholic World Report*.

Dr. Susan Treacy is Professor of Music at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. She is a member of the CMAA and a frequent reviewer for *Sacred Music*.

