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EDITORIAL

Practical Sacrality

By William Mahrt

The sacredness of the liturgy is axiomatic for a journal called Sacred Music; yet it is also axiomatic for a church whose most recent council issued its first document as a Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy called *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the sixth chapter of which was entitled "Sacred Music." The sacredness of the liturgy was also axiomatic for the tradition before the council, especially beginning with Pope St. Pius X, whose Motu Proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* gave "sanctity" as one of the three characteristics of sacred music. This all suggests that music must be the vehicle of maintaining the sacredness of the liturgy, at least when it is music that is unambiguously sacred.

Pope Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II before him emphasize the necessity of reading the council documents in the light of tradition, a process they name "the hermeneutic of continuity." Yet in the sixties the change to the vernacular and particularly to a mediocre translation unwittingly played into the hands of those cultivating the "hermeneutic of discontinuity," and it was followed by a period when music often compromised rather than fostered the sanctity of the liturgy.

It is now high time to reconnect with the tradition and to restore a sense of sacrality to the celebration of the liturgy throughout the church. One of Pope Benedict's purposes in encouraging the more frequent celebration of the extraordinary form was to hold up a mirror of sacrality to the ordinary form. Many of us look to the old rite itself as a kind of ideal, and this is understandable, since the preponderance of the treasury of sacred music was formed in that context. Moreover, for some of us, it was the liturgy we grew up with. But even if one were to hold that the extraordinary form is the more perfect form and seek to cultivate it exclusively—something completely admissible for individuals—as musicians and as an organization devoted to the cultivation of sacred music, we have a larger responsibility. Since the ordinary form is the norm in the parishes and cathedrals, the recovery of the sacrality of the liturgy in this form is essential. A slow, gradual improvement on a broad scale is necessary. The council gave Gregorian chant first place in the liturgy and also gave classical polyphony and organ music a special role, and the increased use of these can very well be an important step.

It is now high time to reconnect with the tradition and to restore a sense of sacrality to the celebration of the liturgy throughout the church.

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There are significant obstacles: 1) many musicians in the parishes have no formation in Gregorian chant; in fact, some of them have been hired from Protestant traditions, perhaps with the implicit assumption that this will insure and improve the Protestant model, the four-hymn sandwich; 2) some pastors do not see the centrality of music to the liturgy, sometimes being openly hostile to chant and polyphony; 3) congregations have become accustomed to the hymns or "songs" that have completely replaced the Propers of the Mass, and the question is reported to have been asked by a member of one congregation, "Why can't we have the good old Catholic music, like 'On Eagles' Wings'"?

On the other hand, many more pastors are becoming supportive of just that repertory—chant and polyphony. According to *Musicam Sacram* (¶28–30), the repertory of chant includes three general categories, 1) the recitatives and simple formulae by which the priest sings his parts and engages in dialogues with the congregation, 2) the Ordinary of the Mass, generally sung by the congregation, and 3) the Proper of the Mass. All three of these categories can make a significant contribution to the sacrality of the Mass. When the priest sings his parts, his delivery is lifted up from the conversational tone of the everyday, which we all too often hear in the liturgy; when he sings his parts it is unambiguously clear that he is doing something sacred. Moreover, the lively alternation of priest and people singing is a vivid representation of the respective roles, enhanced by the melodic and rhythmic vitality of singing. When the congregation sings the ordinary in Gregorian chant, they are united by ancient melodies that are yet ever fresh and beautiful; these melodies bear no trace of the everyday music that crowds our consciousness from radio, television, and commercial background music; their rhythm is like nothing we hear outside the liturgy. Recently, there has been a strong movement towards the singing of the Propers of the Mass—the prescribed introit, gradual, alleluia, offertory, and communion. When these are chanted, they contribute to an elevation of the rites they accompany, emphasizing the sacredness of the action and eliciting the recollection and reflection the congregation urgently requires. The Propers of the Mass in their full Gregorian melodies constitute by far the largest body of chant for the Mass and include the most excellent pieces in the repertory. The wholesale replacement of the propers by arbitrarily chosen hymns or "songs" cannot hold a candle to these authentic propers.

Let me repeat what I have often said: hymns are not bad: in fact, the best of them are beautiful. Yet there is a better way: The sacrality of the liturgy is substantially enhanced when what is sung is what the church and its tradition prescribes to be sung. In place of hymns, the Propers of the Mass should be introduced. These are what the church prescribes and they are a substantial portion of the repertory of Gregorian chant, about which the council said, "The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given first place in liturgical services."[1]

There are relative goods here. Not all good things are equally good, but some are greater goods. Clearly hymns are a greater good than "songs" in the style of current pop music from the secular (very secular) world. But from the point of view of sacrality, the proper introit, gradual, alleluia, offertory, and communion, with their texts from the scripture, mainly the psalms, and with their flowing speech-like rhythm, convey the sense of singing the Mass, rather than singing at Mass, of fulfilling a sacred requirement by performing what the liturgy requires. There continues a series of relative goods—to chant the texts of the Mass propers on a psalm tone (a practice that was prevalent before the council, but which at the time we considered almost an abuse) is better than not to sing them at all. If the situation requires them to be in English, then a greater good will probably be

[1] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116.

to use one of the several available simple settings to chant melodies now available in English. Even better would be to sing a good adaptation of the full Gregorian melody to English. There is no clear solution to which version should be used, but perhaps the solution should be that of high-church Anglicans for quite a long time—choirmasters made their own adaptations. There are inherent limitations in such English Gregorian versions. At first they seem an ideal solution, but upon repetition imperfections begin to appear. This is normal, and for such chants, continuing revision and thus gradual improvement are essential. But we must recall that this process of gradual improvement has already taken place over centuries for Gregorian chant in Latin, and Gregorian propers in Latin are more beautiful, a greater good.

We have often proposed a general program for the incorporation of chant and polyphony into the regular parish liturgy. In most places, this should be done gradually: The priest can begin by singing the dialogues with the people and the preface, as well as the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. He can gradually add the orations and the other prayers. The lessons could follow, and even the Eucharistic Prayer itself can be sung, all in good time. The people can sing the simple Sanctus and Agnus, then a Kyrie; if this is successful, then these can be upgraded by choosing more extended melodies. For a congregation that sings well, the Gloria and Credo can eventually be added. The propers can be added by the choir; if necessary, simple psalm-tone propers can suffice at the beginning, though a better solution is to use the tones for introit and communion psalmody, which are somewhat more melodic. If the congregation is attached to hymns, and if their singing of the ordinary is just at its beginning, then it would be wise to keep some hymns; often a hymn is sung before Mass and then the entrance procession takes place during the singing of the introit by the choir in a relatively simple setting. At the communion there is time for a variety of music: perhaps the Gregorian communion antiphon could be sung with psalm verses alternating with the repetition of the antiphon. A motet could be sung at the offertory as well as at the communion. The singing of the congregation should be cultivated, so that until they can sing several parts of the ordinary well, some hymns should be retained for them. But the ideal should also be kept in mind—the congregation singing all of the ordinary, the choir singing all of the proper—in which case the need for hymns may disappear. This general process may be adapted in a variety of ways, depending upon the abilities of all concerned, the priest, the congregation, and the choir.

It is a sign that the tide is turning in the direction of more sacred music.

It is a sign that the tide is turning in the direction of more sacred music that the most recent issue of *Pastoral Music* (January, 2011), the journal of the National Pastoral Musicians, traditionally no particular friend of chant, has devoted an entire issue to the theme "Chant and Her Children in Today's Liturgy," with articles on chant, polyphony, and organ music. An introductory essay by J. Michael McMahon, the president of the organization and a member of the committee that drafted *Sing to the Lord*, cites that document about the use of Gregorian chant and encourages the membership to make "chant an integral part of the repertoire of your worshiping community." We heartily welcome this development and encourage their membership to consider the gradual incorporation of these sacred musics into their liturgies. Perhaps the gradualism described above will suggest effective ways of doing this.

ARTICLES

The Relationship between the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Liturgy

By Edward Schaefer

[This lecture was presented at the Sacred Music Colloquium 2010, June 21–27, 2010]

A few years ago I had the privilege of visiting the Church of St. Agnes in St. Paul, Minnesota, where I spent a weekend observing the parish, praying in the church, and interviewing the now-deceased Monsignor Schuler. In the course of that interview he commented about the history of the Church Music Association of America (CMAA).

"Back in the fifties," he noted, "there were two groups, the Society of St. Cecilia and the St. Gregory Society. We had great battles about the interpretation of the quilisma. Then in the late fifties and early sixties, especially as the council was unfolding, it became clear to all of us that we had much bigger problems to address than the quilisma was giving us." As all of you know, these larger challenges were the impetus for the merger of the two groups into what is now the CMAA.

I think that if Monsignor Schuler were here today he would certainly be pleased to see the progress that has been made in the association, especially in the last couple of years. I attended undergraduate school here at Duquesne in the late sixties and early seventies. I attended Mass at Epiphany regularly—quite often the 2:00 a.m. "printers' Mass" as it was sometimes called. I can tell you that in the 1970s only in my wildest dreams would I ever have imagined Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* being sung here. Truly, a lot has been accomplished.

So, I speak to you tonight with most fond memories of the short time I had with Monsignor Schuler and with a deep gratitude to Bill Mahrt and all of the colloquium planners for affording me this opportunity.

Background

My topic this evening pertains to the relationship between the two forms of the Mass. First, I want to say that I would prefer not to use the terms "ordinary" and "extraordinary." Even though these are the official terms, I don't want to seem prejudiced by constantly referring to how extraordinary the older form of the Mass is. So I will use the terms *Novus Ordo* and the Tridentine or traditional Mass. I hope that will be acceptable.

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The way I have chosen to explore this relationship is to look at the Tridentine Mass as something of an older sibling to the Novus Ordo. As such, the Tridentine Mass has a little more experience—actually about fifteen hundred years or so—and, therefore, a few things to teach the Novus Ordo. It's a bit like when I started driving, one of the first things my older brother did was to teach me how to disconnect the odometer. That way, when I told my father I was going one place, but my intention was to go somewhere else, I could disconnect the odometer at the right mileage and thereby make the miles on the odometer match the mileage that my father would surely have estimated as appropriate for the trip. So in a similar—but let's hope somewhat less dysfunctional—way, there are a few matters relating the world of worship and the life of the Catholic Church concerning which the older and more experienced Tridentine Mass might well mentor the younger and perhaps more exuberant, but less experienced Novus Ordo, with the hope that in some not-too-distant century, the two forms of the Mass can come to family reunions as happy and well-adjusted Masses.

"Quality music" meant hymns from the repertoire of various Protestant denominations.

Now, at the outset of this exploration, I must first make a small confession to you—one a little more serious than disconnecting odometers. I am one of those who have gone to the "other" side. I travel a hundred miles each week to attend a Tridentine Mass, and it has rejuvenated my spiritual life and my hope for the future.

So how do I explain this clearly reactionary and irrational behavior? I am not sure that I can, fully. I don't completely understand it myself, but maybe a little background might be a good starting place from which all of us can figure out what has gone wrong with me.

My first professional position was as a church musician. I had studied organ and sacred music as an undergraduate and graduate student, and after graduation I landed a full-time position in a fast growing Catholic parish, a parish that was destined to become the largest in Dallas.

It was the mid-1970s, and things were changing faster than change itself. I was determined to maintain some level of "quality" in a church that was embracing the popular culture with amazing rapidity. What did "quality" mean? For the most part, it did not mean chant—even though, curiously, it was the chant that had drawn me to the idea of working in the church. Sadly, chant wasn't even on the radar screen, except perhaps for a few days in Lent when we were supposed to feel guilty, somber, and morbid, at which time chant was deemed as the most appropriate music to elicit those emotions.

No, in general "quality music" meant hymns from the repertoire of various Protestant denominations rather than "guitar music" built on three chords. It also meant what I have come to call "utilitarian music" for most of the responses of the Mass. This was music that imitated hymnody, that could be played on the organ, and that didn't have lots of arpeggiated chords in the accompaniments. It also meant the Gelineau Psalms, the modality and speech-based rhythms of which gave them something of an affinity to chant, while their accompaniments, filled with seventh-chords, gave them a kind of freshness that everyone seemed to crave.

My work also centered on creating a large choral program modeled largely on the programs of our neighboring Protestant churches. There was a choir for every age group in what we musicians

dubbed as our "womb-to-tomb" choir programs. Of course, there were the brass ensembles for special feasts, occasional concerts, and lots of promotional materials designed to encourage everyone to participate—to "sing for joy" as the bumper stickers all over my Volkswagen bug proclaimed.

All in all, however, it was a losing battle. The pressures to "consumerize" the music were relentless. Ultimately, I took refuge in academia. After earning a doctorate, I eventually gained employment in a Jesuit institution whose choral program was in a serious state of decline. (I had never imagined myself making music in a Jesuit school—the concept itself seemed a bit oxymoronic. However, since my confirmation name was Ignatius Loyola, I assumed it was providential, and it was.) There I was given complete latitude to shape the program according to my strengths and interests. Over time, I developed a program that was completely devoted to the musical patrimony of the church: a schola that sang chant and mostly medieval and Renaissance polyphony, a choir devoted to the *a cappella* repertoire of the church, and a third choral ensemble that sang the church's choral-orchestral music. The schola sang for a chanted Mass every Sunday: English adaptations of Gregorian formulas for the priest's parts and the readings, the Gregorian proper, and either a Gregorian or polyphonic ordinary—quite similar to what the choir at St. Ann's in Palo Alto under Dr. Mahrt's direction did for forty years or so. The Mass gave a certain amount of decorum and solemnity to the Novus Ordo Mass that was largely absent elsewhere. It was quite gratifying, even if only for a small group of us. The other choirs sang beautiful concerts and also achieved a high level of notoriety, regionally and even nationally, both for their beautiful singing and for the focus of their repertoire. I was truly blessed for that opportunity.

The pressures to "consumerize" the music were relentless.

For reasons that are too numerous to mention here and somewhat irrelevant anyway, that chapter of my life ended in 2007. However, what is worth sharing is that one of the reasons for my departure was the same as the one that led me to leave full-time church work—a relentless pressure for a program that was more consumer oriented. I left that university and took an administrative post at the University of Florida, a public university, where curiously enough it is far easier to be a devoté of the traditional music of the church than it ever was in a Catholic institution.

Early in my tenure here, a small group of students came to see me. Somehow they had discovered that I was a chant "scholar," and they asked if I would form a group for them to sing chant. We started a small schola. The local parishes were (and still are) largely dedicated to various types of popular music, so our music did not fit well into the local scene. However, about fifty miles to the south a Tridentine Mass was starting. We offered our services and were warmly welcomed.

This was my first experience with the Tridentine Mass since my altar boy days in the early 1960s. My initial reaction was more personal than that of the younger members of the schola, but essentially the same: "This is so beautiful! Whose idea was it to stop doing this?"

However, as the last couple of years have unfolded, my appreciation for the traditional Mass has grown far deeper than revealing in its surface beauty. Yes, there are some amusing matters. For example, we don't use decibel meters to measure congregational participation. Also, when Father asks for a high Mass we don't have to call a dozen committee meetings to decide what to do. Having a high Mass can mean only one thing: the Gregorian proper, a Gregorian or polyphonic ordinary, and sung

Mass has become something also based on deeper motives than my comfort level with the music.

responses. I look back on the days of planning Masses, such as the diocesan Millennium Mass, in which every ethnic, cultural, and political group waged its own battle for musical and linguistic turf in the Mass, and say a quiet prayer of gratitude that I don't have to battle for my music or for anyone else's. I can simply and joyfully focus on praying at Mass because I have given myself over to the church's music. This is, perhaps, a start at understanding my irrational behavior, but the truth is that my embrace of the traditional Mass has become something also based on deeper motives than my comfort level with the music, just as it is based on deeper motives than the surface beauty of this Mass.

Lessons the Novus Ordo Can Learn from the Tridentine Mass

Humility

This is also a perfect place to begin to look at some of those deeper motives—those deeper lessons that the Novus Ordo can learn from the Tridentine Mass, because just as I refer to the joy I have found in being able to give myself over to the church's music, the very virtue of humility, that is, that attitude of submissive respect, even awe, is one of the primary lessons that the traditional Mass can teach the Novus Ordo.

When I talk about giving myself over to the church's music, I am, in a way, speaking metaphorically about the whole process of giving myself to something that is much larger than I. To experience the Tridentine Mass is to be put face to face with the reality that the Mass is not something that I will ever fully understand. Its distant language and its strange, solemn, and highly stylized ritual are but mere symbols of the mystery that reaches far beyond my meager abilities of comprehension.

The Mass as the Action of Christ

I am, however, able to comprehend clearly—and this is lesson two—that the Mass is not something I do; it is unquestionably what Christ does for me. This is evident from the moment we pause at the foot of the altar and beg for ourselves and for the priest that, even though he be unworthy, God will deign to work through him and renew the sacrifice of Calvary, and it is evident through every part of the Mass. The Mass is God's great gift to us, and we are most blessed to receive it humbly and gratefully.

Monsignor Harbert, you may know, is the former executive director of ICEL and the person who guided most of the work on the forthcoming translation of the *Missale Romanum*. He is, among many things, a brilliant etymologist. A few years ago, he commented to me that in the translation work on the missal, some research was brought to his attention indicating that the common definition of the word "liturgy," that is, "the work of the people," is probably incorrect, and that a more appropriate definition, based on the etymology of the word, would be something more like "the work for the people." Truly, the Mass is Christ's work for his people, his sacrificial giving of himself for our salvation. Of course, both forms of the Mass share in this truth. The Novus Ordo just needs

to learn how to be a little clearer about this as the singularly essential truth of the Mass, and that is something that the Tridentine Mass can teach it.

Repentance

Closely related to the virtue of humility is the attitude of repentance. Recently I had the occasion to visit the great state of Massachusetts. During my stay there I commented in a conversation that to live a Catholic life is to live a life of repentance. John the Baptist's cry to "repent"—that is, to change our hearts—should ring constantly in every Catholic's ears. (Just to be clear—and I made this clarification in my conversation—repentance certainly involves doing penance, but it is not same thing as doing penance. It is that turning of our hearts away from sin and toward the Lord.) Even so, as soon as I made the comment, I got a dressing down that reminded me of being caught when I disconnected the odometer in my dad's car. Repentance had no place in the vocabulary of a "Massachusetts Catholic," as my conversation partner coined the term. The preferred word was Redemption, which seemed to mean a redemption that did not require repentance.

Then I was treated to a story about a young woman at the 1993 World Youth Congress in Denver who was exclaiming her love for the Holy Father in a television interview. The interviewer goaded the young woman by asking her how she could love the Holy Father so much when he led a church so oppressive to women. Her reply was that "he certainly has a right to his opinion." This, I was told, was a good example of a "Massachusetts Catholic": a person who claims to be Catholic, but who also claims the right to define the terms of Catholicism, a person who claims eternal redemption by virtue of that self-defined membership, but who denies any responsibility of repentance in relationship to that redemption.

Closely related to the virtue of humility is the attitude of repentance.

I don't mean to pick on Massachusetts. The state was simply the accident of the experience. I am afraid that the essence of that experience might have occurred in any state.

However, to bring the focus to my point, one cannot attend the Tridentine Mass for any length of time and hold such beliefs. The Tridentine Mass brings us face to face not only with the truth of Christ's redemption, not only of the selfless and loving gift that Christ's redeeming sacrifice on the Cross is, but also that we must repent—continuously in thought and in deed—to be made worthy of Christ's redemption.

Let me offer a small example of how this unfolds in real life. In a typical Novus Ordo Mass everyone goes to communion—virtually everyone. In a typical Tridentine Mass, most people take communion, but a more noticeable number than in a Novus Ordo Mass do not. Why the difference?

In the Novus Ordo, there has been an overwhelming emphasis on the Mass as a meal—unfortunately to the denigration of the Mass as a renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary. In a meal everyone eats, so it makes no sense to come to the meal and not eat. In a Tridentine Mass, however, the reality of the Mass as a renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary is unshakably clear. To receive the gift of Calvary it is absolutely necessary to have a repentant heart and to live a repentant life. So for any

number of reasons it could be perfectly appropriate not to receive communion: not having fasted—an act of repentance; not being in the state of grace—the accepting of the possibility of sin is itself a step toward repentance; or simply not being in the proper frame of mind—that repentant mind that is turned away from sin and self and toward God.

I think the Novus Ordo would do well to watch its big brother, the Tridentine Mass, and learn how, in its own way, to return that spirit of repentance to the center of Catholic praying and living.

Well, we've touched on the easy ones so far—humility, repentance and the Mass as the action of Christ rather than of man. We should be warmed up. So, let's tackle four of the more challenging matters in this relationship between the church's two forms of the liturgy.

Continuity with the Tradition

Let's explore, first, the matter of continuity with the tradition. Certainly the Novus Ordo has a level of continuity with the tradition. It was, in the best analysis, an attempt to reinvigorate the Mass with the spirit, if not the detail, of the patristic liturgy. This well-intentioned endeavor, however, ran into a few problems.

The first is that, in spite of accounts in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Apostolic Traditions of Hippolytus, we don't know exactly what the patristic liturgy looked like. We can't recreate it exactly, and Archbishop Bugnini's notion that this is irrelevant anyway, because "the true tradition . . . means not to do what others have done but find once again the spirit,"[1] that is, without regard for the centuries-old practices that guarded and transmitted that spirit, is simply misguided at best. The very nature of tradition makes this approach to the Mass implausible. It is simply illogical to say that we wish to restore the Mass to a pristine, patristic state, but since that it impossible, we will do something new that will somehow help us to rediscover that pristine, patristic spirit of the Mass.

We don't know exactly what the patristic liturgy looked like.

Secondly, we have to realize that until the fourth century, the liturgy was that of a persecuted faithful. Regardless of what we do know about the details of that early liturgy, they could hardly be held up as exemplary and applicable to the church through the ages. Yes, one might argue today that the persecution of the faith is as great today as it ever was. However, the persecution today is of a very different methodology than it was in the early days of the church. Our souls may face grave dangers, but we are not being fed to lions for spectacle. We do not have to have liturgies today that we can dismantle and hide on a moment's notice.

Thirdly, if we are a church that identifies itself by the concepts of both tradition and continuing revelation, it is simply impossible to disregard either the essentially changeless nature of the Mass or centuries of delicate and organic development in the Mass. The two are intimately intertwined in just

[1] Annibale Bugnini, *La riforma liturgica* (1948–1975): *Nuova edizione riveduta e arricchita di note e di supplimenti per una lettura analistica*, BEL 30 (Rome: C.L.V., 1997), 58; cited in Sven Conrad, F.S.S.P., "Renewal of the Liturgy in the Spirit of Tradition: Perspectives with a View Towards the Liturgical Development of the West," *Antiphon*, 14, no.1 (2010), 117.

the same way that the dogmas of the church are changeless, but over the centuries our understanding of them continues to unfold.

Gustav Leonhardt, the great interpreter of eighteenth-century German music, used to say that while his group performed on eighteenth-century instruments and they used eighteenth-century phrasings and articulations, along with other performance practices of the period, it wasn't so that they could replicate eighteenth-century music exactly as it was performed in the eighteenth century. That, he contended, would be impossible, if for no other reason than we are not eighteenth-century people. Our ears are filled not only with Bach, but also with Beethoven, Brahms, and Bartok. Our way of living is different, so we experience music differently. Yet, his group performs eighteenth-century music in this way, guarding the traditions of the past, because it is *the* way that we, as twenty-first-century people can enter into the true spirit of this music. The recent centuries of our cultural conditioning, that is, the "organic development" of our culture over time, render our experience of this music both different than it would have been experienced by an eighteenth-century listener, and, at the same time, intimately connected with the tradition, that is, with the timelessness of this music.

It goes similarly in the Mass. The Mass on one level is changeless. The Tridentine Mass is very similar to the Mass of Gregory the Great in the early seventh century. We humbly respect that continuity with the tradition not because we simply want to imitate slavishly something old, but because it is *the* way that we, as twenty-first-century Catholics connect unequivocally to the apostolic tradition. We cannot simply create something new and then, by means of a newly created philosophy, imbue the Mass with a "spirit" of the tradition.

The Novus Ordo has an enormous amount of flexibility built into it.

At the same time, there have been over the centuries, delicate, organic additions to the Mass. The traditional Mass is a Mass that embraces the developments after the Edict of Toleration and the birth of the grand Roman liturgies with the Schola Cantorum; it embraces the codification of the proper and of the lessons, completed for the most part by the reign of Gregory the Great at the turn of the seventh century; it embraces the magnificent music of the medieval, Renaissance, and classical eras, and yet—in spite of the changes in its polyphonic music over the centuries—it embraces the timelessness of a liturgy that has changed very little for about the last fifteen hundred years. It is more as if in its timeless nobility it has gathered the signatures, if you will, of all those in the communion of saints who have prayed it with us, but only centuries earlier. This is continuity with a capital C, and this is the continuity that the Novus Ordo has yet fully to learn.

Freedom and Dignity

Not entirely unrelated to this concept of continuity with tradition, the Novus Ordo also has more to learn about the meaning of freedom and dignity. The Novus Ordo has an enormous amount of flexibility built into it. It is rather malleable according to the desires of any given priest. Even a priest who prays the Mass only one way all the time does so as a matter of choice, because the liturgy itself permits almost innumerable combinations of choices. We might be tempted to look at this multitude of choices as a sort of freedom. However, the temptation is just that—a temptation—because this is a freedom that is borne of our own desires, well informed or well intended or

not. True freedom comes from a total submission to the truth as revealed by Jesus Christ, who said, "you shall know the truth (referring to himself), and the truth shall make you free."[2]

A liturgy—such as the traditional Mass—that is carefully regulated in all its details, frees the soul from the temptation of self-motivated choices. In so doing, it invites us into a relationship with Christ that similarly frees our souls from the temptations of self-oriented choices. It is one way that we learn that the liturgy is not about what we do, but about what Christ does.

Of course, this notion of freedom is closely tied to the virtue of humility we discussed earlier. As the priest offers the Mass *in persona Christi* there is never any doubt of the hierarchical relationship between humanity and God. We are his creatures, "the sheep of his pasture,"[3] and all that we are and all that we have are gifts. The traditional Mass is never a stage for displaying rights or equality in the church. To kneel at this Mass, whether it be for the Canon or to receive the sacred Host in Communion, or for any other part of the Mass, is a freeing act of humility, submission and adoration. In surrendering my sense of self to Christ, I free myself to receive all the grace he has earned for me. I am spiritually far stronger submitting myself to him than I ever could be thinking that I have some kind of rights in his presence.

A liturgy that is carefully regulated in all its details, frees the soul from the temptation of self-motivated choices.

The import of this notion of freedom cannot be overly stressed because it is also intimately connected with man's dignity. Growing out of the enlightenment, the nineteenth-century philosophy of liberalism would have us believe that, "It is contrary to the natural, innate, and inalienable right and liberty and dignity of man, to subject himself to an authority, the root, rule, measure, and sanction of which is not in himself."[4] That is to say that man's dignity is ontological. It is found within his very being. It belongs to him simply because he is.

Of course, such thinking is not new. It has been a part of the human condition ever since the fall of Adam. Because of sin, we too easily lose sight of the truth that the dignity of man comes not from himself, but from his relationship to God. We are filled with dignity to the extent that we are in union with objective Truth and Goodness, which, of course, are personifications of God. So, we are filled with dignity when we are in union with God and we reflect that dignity that he bears of himself, being consummate Truth and Goodness. We lose that dignity when we reject objective Truth and Goodness, that is, when we reject God—or when we sin. We have no dignity that is borne of ourselves.

"The principle [of liberalism taken to its logical conclusion] implies the denial of all *true* authority; for authority necessarily presupposes a power outside and above man to bind him morally,"[5] which, if man were the source of his own dignity, would be impossible.

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[2] John 8:32.

[3] Ps. 99:3.

[4] H. Gruber, "Liberalism," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910; accessed March 14, 2010) <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09212a.html>.

[5] Gruber, "Liberalism."

This particular topic might well consume the entire evening because it is absolutely critical to our understanding of who we are, our relationship to God, how we are called to live our lives on this earth, and how we might attain eternal salvation. However, with regard to the liturgy, let me just emphasize that when we approach the liturgy as something sacred that is given to us, we take the first steps toward understanding the true nature of our dignity. The traditional liturgy does not give us the possibility of thinking about the liturgy in any other way. It does not allow us to approach it as something to be molded or shaped. In this way, the traditional liturgy is a good mentor for the Novus Ordo as it, too, endeavors to lead us to an understanding of the true nature of our dignity.

The Value of Being Countercultural

The notions of continuity with the tradition, the true meaning of freedom and dignity have a partner that forms with them a kind of trinity of concepts that are among the most serious matters that must be addressed in our liturgical reforms today. The third member of this trinity is what we might call the value of being countercultural.

In that liberal philosophy dominates contemporary culture, and especially contemporary American culture, it should be evident already that there are some intrinsic values to being countercultural. However, the idea of being countercultural as it relates to a Catholic life and to the liturgy is worth some consideration of its own.

Most of us think that the idea of being American and Catholic are perfectly compatible. However, it has not always been so. When Catholic immigrants from Europe were filling America's factories and mines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Catholics were viewed with a great deal of suspicion, if not outright hatred. If you have ever seen the movie or read the book on the life of Saint Elizabeth Seton, you'll recall the scene in which Elizabeth tells Father O'Brien that she wants to convert to Catholicism. He quickly reminds her that the Catholics of New York were considered as the "shiftless, scrubby immigrants" of the city.[6] They were the "dirty, filthy, red-faced"[7] poor and outcast of the city, who held the jobs that no decent person would take, and least of all someone from the city's Episcopalian aristocracy that was Elizabeth's background. A later scene in the film depicts the burning of her parish church by Protestants on Christmas Eve, a not atypical example of the treatment received by immigrant Catholics at that time. In fact, the persecution of Catholic children in the public schools was a significant factor in the ruling of the Catholic bishops in the plenary council of Baltimore in 1884—yes, the same council that gave us the Baltimore Catechism—that every Catholic parish was to have a school of its own.[8]

The idea of being countercultural as it relates to a Catholic life and to the liturgy is worth some consideration.

[6] Joseph I. Dirvin, C.M., *Mrs. Seton: Foundress of the American Sisters of Charity*, new canonization edition (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), p. 148.

[7] Dirvin, *Mrs. Seton*, p. 171.

[8] Thomas Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 3rd ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2004), p. 371.

The point here is that American life, with its unbridled capitalism, which seemed to take advantage of the poor rather than lift them up, with its insatiable appetite for material goods, was not wholly compatible with the Catholic approach to life. The church does not condemn capitalism or material goods. They are simply not her primary concern or focus. She—we—are primarily focused on other things: those things that will reward us in the next life more so than in this life. So, while politically, that is, as Americans, we might say that we "are endowed with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,"[9] spiritually, that is, as Catholics, we know that life is a gift; true liberty can be found only in our relationship with absolute Truth and Goodness, and true happiness has nothing to do with the things of this world.

The church does not condemn capitalism or material goods.

The Catholic approach to life in this world was something of a thorn in the side of America as it was forging a new path politically, economically, and socially. In fact, Catholics were so much outside the sphere of liberally-oriented American life that in Chicago, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Mundelein went to great extremes to show the country that Catholics could be Americans too. In 1921, he built a great seminary in Georgian colonial architecture, with a chapel that scandalized his brothers in the episcopacy because it looked to them like a New England meeting house.[10] His Villa at the seminary was, indeed, a copy of Washington's Mount Vernon.

When Jack Kennedy ran for president in 1960, he was scrutinized about his religion more so than any presidential candidate in U.S. history. He nearly had to renounce his faith in order to get elected. His election was probably a symbolic moment of tragic proportions for American Catholics. It seemed to mainstream America that the temptations of the world had worn down the Catholic resistance to America's self-centered, materialistic approach to life enough that electing a Catholic would not challenge America's direction. Sadly, that has been true. While Catholics of voting age constitute a large enough block to change American politics overnight, we do not vote according to Catholic principles, we vote according to other principles, principles that permit what Pope John Paul II called "the culture of death" to spread unabated.

So what does any of this have to do with the Mass? The Mass, as the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy stated so eloquently, "is the summit toward which [all] the activity of the Church is directed,"[11] and what is the purpose—or the singular focus—of the activity of the church that constantly draws her to the Mass? It is the purpose of the Mass: the glorification of God and the sanctification of his people.[12] We might ask the same question of contemporary culture: What

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[9] *Declaration of Independence* (Philadelphia: July 4, 1776). US History (accessed March 18, 2010) <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/document/>.

[10] See Paul R. Martin, *The First Cardinal of the West: The Story of the Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago Under the Administration of His Eminence, George Cardinal Mundelein* (Chicago: The New World Publishing Co., 1934), p. 90. The chapel was, in fact, "modeled after the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, Connecticut;" see *A Short History of the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary* (accessed April 2, 2010) <http://www.vocations.org/history.htm>.

[11] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶10.

[12] Ibid.

is its purpose, its ultimate goal? However we answer that question, we can rest assured that the purpose of contemporary—particular contemporary popular culture—is not the glorification of God and the sanctification of his people. Cultural relevancy in the church, then, is what we might call a sidebar. Understanding the culture in which we live certainly has value, because we all have to live within it. However, focusing on it or embracing it can ultimately only distract us from our true purpose.

Cultural relevancy in the church is what we might call a sidebar.

The traditional form of the Mass is ostensibly a Mass that has no desire to be "culturally relevant." It does not disdain contemporary culture per se; it is simply focused on something much more important, the culture of heaven. The traditional Mass reminds us in a stark and powerful way that our lives must have that same focus. The traditional Mass's lack of interest in or focus upon any culture other than the heavenly culture provides a good example from which its younger sibling, the Novus Ordo, will learn as it matures.

Obedience

Finally, I want to return to how I began this exploration, with my personal experience. As I look at my own life and all the blessings that have been showered on me, all the temptations that I have fought—and the ones I didn't fight—if there is one word that could sum up my entire life experience it is obedience. Not that I have been a model of obedience. This word sums up life for me because it summarizes all the challenges, all the failures, and all the successes of my life. I think it also sums up the whole of a Catholic life. One of my favorite pieces of polyphonic music is the Anerio motet *Christus factus est*. "Christ became obedient." The Vulgate translates it as, "He humbled himself becoming obedient, obedient unto death, even death on a Cross. For which cause God also hath exalted him and hath given him a name which is above all names."[13]

Christ's obedience to the will of his Father summed up his entire life. He was sent to earth for that and that alone. It was through that obedience that he opened the gates of heaven for us, and it is through our obedience to God's will for us that we will be welcomed through those gates.

The liturgy as Christ's action rather than ours, the humility we bring to the foot of the altar before we dare even to approach our Lord in adoration, the constancy of repentance—of turning our hearts to the Lord—that must characterize our lives, our fidelity to the tradition, our seeing that our true dignity lies in the way we embrace Truth and Goodness, and our choosing of the culture of heaven over the culture of the earth—are all expressions of the same thing, the submission of our wills to that of the Father.

For a gathering of musicians, the music of the Mass is intrinsically related to all of these matters, for it is through the music of the Mass, the liturgy's handmaid, that we are assisted in our efforts to engage the matters that we have explored briefly this evening. The musical battles in the church today are only superficially about whether you or I like *Eagles Wings* or *Angelis suis*. For nearly four decades now, in every instance where I have been engaged in a process of "slowly reintroducing

[13] Phil. 2:8–9.

chant and more traditional music" into the Novus Ordo Mass, there comes a point when everyone realizes that the process is not really about musical taste. It's more about living life through a somewhat contemplative frame of reference that does not focus on material concerns; it's more about living in the world but not succumbing to the world, it's about living a life that is less concerned with rights and self actualization and more concerned with repentance and submission of self, that is, that selfless obedience to the will of the Father. If music is, indeed, the handmaid of the liturgy, then its purpose must be the same as the liturgy's: the glorification of God and the sanctification of his people, and the ability of the music to sanctify is, like the liturgy, its ability, through the grace of God, to lead us to lives that are rooted in the matters upon which we have touched this evening.

Before I conclude this evening, I want to be very clear, that even though I do heartily agree with the Holy Father who himself calls the traditional Mass an extraordinary form of the liturgy, I am not suggesting that the traditional Mass should replace the Novus Ordo. What I am saying is that for the continuing efforts of reform in the church to have any lasting beneficial effect—and this includes musical reforms—I do believe that a healthy presence of the traditional Mass is absolutely critical.

For the continuing efforts of reform a healthy presence of the traditional Mass is absolutely critical.

As the Novus Ordo finds it way along the great corridors in the mansion of the church's liturgical history, it needs a mentor to show it the proper way and to keep it from getting lost. The traditional Mass, with its clarity of purpose as the renewal of Christ's unfathomable sacrifice, with a structure that invites a humble and repentant approach, with its "capital C" continuity with the tradition, its unfolding of the one true and eternal truth that will set us free and afford us true dignity, and its eschewing earthly culture for heavenly culture—that is, its shining forth of the glory that results in that total submission of self, that total obedience to the will of the Father—with all of these blessings, the traditional Mass must be that mentor, so that both forms of the Mass can share the full honor and glory due God's greatest gift to man. ℭ

Gregorian Chant: the Foundational Sound of Christian Ritual Music

by Fr. Columba Kelly

Pope Benedict XVI has often spoken about the role of sacred music, such as Gregorian chant, in the spiritual growth of the Universal Church. He has done this as early as November 17, 1985, in a talk he gave as then Cardinal Ratzinger at the Eighth International Church Music Congress in Rome. I would like to share with you some of the remarks from that talk on the role of music designed for use in the liturgy:

He said:

> Liturgical music results from the claim and the dynamics of the Incarnation of the Word. For it means that also among us the [incarnate] Word cannot be mere talk [i.e.: theologizing about the Word of God!]. The sacramental signs are certainly the central way in which the Incarnation continues to work. But they become homeless if they are not immersed in a liturgy that as a whole, follows this expansion of the Word into the realm of the bodily and all our senses. From this there comes, in opposition to the Jewish and Islamic types of cult, the right and even the necessity of images [cf. the Iconoclast heresy]. From this there also comes the necessity of summoning up those deeper realms of understanding and response that disclose themselves [especially] in music.
>
> *The "musification" of faith is a part of the process of the Incarnation of the Word.*
>
> The "musification" of faith [a new word! meaning "faith becoming music"] is a part of the process of the Incarnation of the Word. But this musification is at the same time also ordered to that inner turn of the incarnational event which I tried to indicate before: in the cross and resurrection, the Incarnation of the Word becomes the "verbification" of the flesh. Each penetrates the other. The Incarnation is not taken back; it first becomes definitive at the moment in which the movement, so to speak, is reversed. The flesh itself is "logicized" [i.e.: becomes the very Logos of God], but precisely this verbification [this becoming musical sound] of the flesh effects a new unity of all reality, which was obviously so important to God that He let it cost Him His Son on the cross.
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> On the one hand, the musification of the Word is sensualization, Incarnation, attraction of pre-rational and transrational forces, attraction of the hidden sounds of creation, discovery of the song that lies at the bottom of things. But in this way, this musification is now itself also the turning point in the movement: it is not only Incarnation of the Word, but at the same time "spiritualization" of the flesh [music becoming the theological virtue of faith in us]. Wood and metal become tone, the unconscious and the unreleased become ordered and meaningful sound [a form of the Divine Logos]. A corporealization takes place which is a spiritualization, and a spiritualization which is a corporealization. The Christian

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> corporealization is always a spiritualization at the same time, and the Christian spiritualization is a corporealization into the body of the incarnate Logos. [Like the phrase in the Third Eucharistic Prayer, our faith filled music becomes "one body, one spirit in the Risen Christ!].[1]

In an address Benedict XVI gave as pope on June 24, 2006 in the Sistine Chapel he said:

> An authentic updating of sacred music cannot occur except in line with the great tradition of the past, of Gregorian chant, and of sacred polyphony. This is why in the musical field, as well as in that of other artistic forms, the ecclesial community has always promoted and supported those who investigate new expressive ways—without rejecting the past—[this has been] the history of the human spirit, which is also the history of its dialogue with God.[2]

In an address given at my alma mater, the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome on October 13, 2007, he concluded his address on the role of sacred music by saying:

> The ecclesiastical authority must work to guide wisely the development of such a demanding type of music, not "freezing" its treasure, but by seeking to integrate the valid innovations of the present into the heritage of the past in order to achieve a synthesis worthy of the lofty mission reserved to it in the divine service. I am certain that the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, in harmony with the Congregation for Divine Worship, will not fail to make its contribution to the "updating" for our times of the precious traditions that abound in sacred music.[3]

The ecclesial community has always promoted and supported those who investigate new expressive ways.

As recently as October 18th, 2009, when he attended a piano concert in his honor, the Pope reflected on the role and the power of music in his remarks at the end of the concert. He said "Great music, gives the spirit repose, awakens profound sentiments and almost naturally invites us to lift up our mind and heart to God in every situation, whether joyous or sad, of human existence. Music can become prayer."

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[1] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Liturgy and Church Music," *Communio: International Catholic Review* (1986), 377–390, originally published in Italian in *Christus in Ecclesia Cantat*: VIII Conventus Internationalis Musicae Sacrae Romae, Anno Musicae Europaeo 1985, ed. Johannes Overath (Rome: Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae, 1986); it also appeared in *Sacred Music*, 112, no. 4 (1985), 13–22, and another version in *A New Song for the Lord* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).

[2] Benedict XVI, Address at a Concert Offered in Honour of the Holy Father Sponsored by the Domenico Bartolucci Foundation, Sistine Chapel, Saturday, June 24, 2006 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060624_fondazione-bartolucci_en.html>.

[3] Benedict XVI, Address to the Pontifical Institute tor Sacred Music, October 13, 2007 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2007/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20071013_musica-sacra_en.html>.

Our current understanding of Gregorian chant began with the work of the monks of the abbey of Solesmes in France. In 1867, Dom Joseph Pothier wrote that "What is important is to know how to give the chant a movement of natural recitation." Later on, in 1869, he wrote that

> as far as syllables, neumes, and distinctions are concerned . . . it is very important to teach the singers to follow the sense of the phrase . . . . It is always the words that inspire the chant. And the chant, which is the very height of accentuation, breathes life into the words, imparting to the rhythm its characteristic ease and freedom, which is comparable to the rhythm of speech. For the rhythm always flows from the words as from its original and natural source.[4]

"What is important is to know how to give the chant a movement of natural recitation."

In 1883 Dom Pothier published the *Liber Gradualis*. It presented the fundamentals of what was later called the "School of Solesmes." The interpretation of chant is based on its text, at that time called the "oratorical rhythm" and now called a "verbal style" or "sung speech." In 1889, Dom André Mocquereau started the publication known as the *Paléographie Musicale*. He called this his "war machine" against the Medicean Edition of the chant and the theory of the mensuralists. In fact at the beginning of the *Nombre Musical* in 1908, he wrote: "We have found the rules proposed for the performance of *Les Melodies grégoriennes* of Dom Pothier to be well founded. They appear to us to be natural for teaching and practical use."[5]

It would be a hundred years before these original insights were vindicated to the satisfaction of most chant scholars! In February 1890, Dom Mocquereau wrote back to Solesmes that the Sistine choir "hammered out" the plainchant with a heavy beat and shouted it. To counteract this, he gave a lecture at the French Seminary in Rome. In his journal he wrote: "I tried to prove to them that Gregorian chant is a recitative. I had a reading, some psalmody, and an ornate chant performed." Here we have the original "Solesmes Method" as presented by Dom Mocquereau himself!

In 1908, the commission presided over by Dom Pothier published the *Liber Gradualis*,[6] which has remained the official book of Gregorian chants for the Mass to this day. What had started as an intuition of Dom Pothier that Gregorian rhythm was really a form of "sung speech" was begun to be studied in a scholarly manner by Dom Mocquereau,[7] only to be interrupted by the demands of choirmasters for practical guidelines for performing the rhythm of the chant. For this reason, Dom

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[4] Dom Pierre Combe, O.S.B., *The Restoration of Gregorian Chant: Solesmes and the Vatican Edition*, tr. Theodore N. Marier and William Skinner (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 452; Dom Combe writes: "In 1877, Dom Pothier's first Gregorian publication appeared in the *Revue de l'Art Chrétien*. In it he explained the two systems of Gregorian notation, that of accents and that of dots, and showed how semiology [the first use of this word to describe this research method!] could serve to interpret the delicate nuances of the chant." Ibid., p. 81.

[5] Dom André Mocquereau, O.S.B., *"Le Nombre Musical Grégorien": A Study of Gregorian Musical Rhythm*, vol. I, pt. 1, tr. Aileen Tone (Paris: Desclé, 1932), p. 16; cf. <http://musicasacra.com/pdf/mocq-web.pdf>.

[6] Combe, *Restoration*, p. 410.

[7] Dom André Mocquereau, O.S.B., "Précis d'histoire de la notation neumatique d'après les fac-similés publiés dans la Paléographie Musicale," *Paléographie musicale*, Vol III: *Le répons-graduel Justus ut palma, Deuxième partie* (Solesmes: Imprimerie Saint-Pierre, 1892), pp. 79–82.

Mocquereau now stated that for the study of the rhythm one needs to look first at the melody and only then at the text itself![8]

This is why the study of the text did not come until the second volume, which only appeared twenty years later, and that largely under the influence of Dom Joseph Gajard, who himself, always remained "the Master of the Word," wherever he taught. He made one sing out the word. He would say that what one needs is "a very pure line of syllabic sounds, just what is necessary for pronouncing the text . . . a little intensification, followed by its relaxation, a little protasis, followed by its apodosis, and that is all, a few notes suffice."[9]

When asked why he did not teach his students how to count in twos and threes and mark off the ictus, Gajard would reply: "Eh, c'est une petite trottinement, sans grace—a little trotting about without any gracefulness!"[10] Dom Mocquereau's estimate that it would take about fifty years to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the problem of Gregorian rhythm was incredibly accurate.[11]

For the study of the rhythm one needs to look first at the melody and only then at the text itself!

In fact, it was only in the mid-1950s that Dom Eugène Cardine's semiological studies began to bear fruit in the discovery of the role played by the verbal rhythm and its syllabic values in syllabic and semi-ornate chants and the rhythmic significance of graphic separation (or more recently called, neume groupings) in determining the rhythmic structure of the more melismatic chants. The results of that work are now available in English in Dom Cardine's book entitled *Gregorian Semiology* as translated by Dr. Robert Fowells.

According to Dom Daniel Saulnier, the current successor to Dom Cardine and chant instructor at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome, the year 1983 is a watershed in the development of the current "Solesmes Method." In that year the *Liber Hymnarius* was published with a special section entitled: "*Some Rules to be Observed in Chanting* as set forth by the Monks of Solesmes" (pp. xi–xvi). It concludes with the remark that: "The principles given here flow from the perfect correspondence

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[8] Mocquereau, *Nombre*, p. 31.

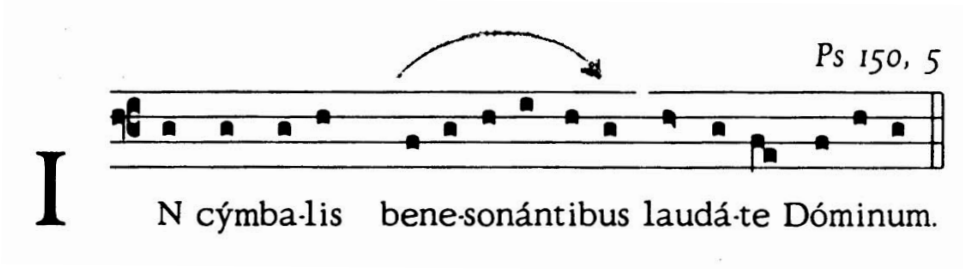
[9] Joseph Gajard, *Les plus belles melodies grégoriennes commentées par Dom Gajard* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1985), p. 25.

[10] The desire to counteract the theories of the mensuralists resulted in the writing by Dom Gajard of *Chant grégorien et la méthode Solesmes* (1949; Eng. tr., *The Solesmes Method*, tr. R. Cecilia Gabain; Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1960). Thus for Dom Gajard his kind of free rhythm is the liberty in the succession of the two kinds of measures, measures that freely alternate between groups of twos and groups of threes. In this version of the Solesmes Method the ictus falls on the first note of a neume in order mark off these units of twos and threes. Dom Gajard called the effect given by the application of this rule "a petit trottinement sans grace!" (a little trotting without grace!). Instead, he insisted in the classes I attended at Solesmes that one feel the ebb and flow of the words and phrases and if one reads that the notes are equal in value and duration, then some are quite a bit more equal than others! Moreover, I have heard Dom Saulnier insist that neither Dom Mocquereau nor Dom Gajard ever applied this method of counting to the singing at Solesmes.

[11] See Dom André Mocquereau, "L'Ecole grégorienne de Solesmes," *Rassegna Gregoriana*, 3, no. 4 (1904), col. 243.

of a sacred text to a Gregorian melody. It is for this reason that singers who show respect for the Latin diction, by that very fact already possess the greater part of what is required to execute well a Gregorian piece."

Dom Saulnier himself has said that although each syllable of the word *benesonantibus* has only a single square note, each syllable has a different value and function in the word:



Look at "be-ne-*son*-***án***-ti-bus." The first three syllables are pre-tonic syllables that pick up speed and volume as they accelerate toward the accented syllable. After this buildup, the accented syllable now contains a great deal of energy and volume/duration. This energy and momentum carries through the next syllable, an intermediate post-tonic syllable. The final syllable of the word then absorbs the remaining energy to bring the forward momentum to a closure at the end of the word before moving on again with the following words (*laudáte Dóminum*). The melody forms a Roman arch over the word, a hallmark of the Gregorian-chant style of composition.

As Dom Daniel Saulnier states,

> The Romano-Frankish chant shows an entirely new concern for the construction of phrases: the melodic curve in the form of an arch, a . . . concern [that] becomes a canon of composition for the "Gregorian." The same holds true for the treatment of words. In the case of both the phrase and the word, the Latin accent is handled in the composition by a melodic elevation. Grammar has regained all its prerogatives over the music and finds itself elevated as the *custos recte loquendi* (the guardian of right speech).

In 1984, Dom Eugène Cardine, the successor of Dom Mocquereau in the work of researching the meaning of the neume designs, beseeched chant directors to "go beyond" (*surpasser*) the neume designs. He told his students: "the danger which awaits us is . . . to lose oneself among all the details identified . . . and to forget the general effect of the whole . . . . By dint of urging analysis, do we miss the synthesis? . . . Music is only learned in order to be performed and heard, to become pleasure and praise." He ended his remarks by saying: "May good sense guide us and keep us halfway between inaccessible perfection and a routine which is too easily satisfied with anything at all!"[12]

As Dom Cardine has remarked in 1977

> Contemporary studies have vindicated Dom Pothier's original insight. In fact, any critical restoration of the melodies, the modality, the rhythm, or the aesthetics of Gregorian chant must begin with the distinction between important notes and secondary notes. . . . By carefully taking into account the sense of the words, the performer has nothing else to do but

[12] Cited Combe, *Restoration*, p. xxv.

> follow the neumes, step by step. They will guide the performer "by the hand." The meaning of the sung text and the character of the musical composition should be brought together to suggest an appropriate measure of length and strength for each syllable and note."[13]

In a return to the original insights of both Dom Pothier and Dom Mocquereau, the monks of Solesmes in their latest editions have brought us back to where they began in the mid-1880s. Like Edgar Allen Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, the "Solesmes Method" has been in front of us all the time! In an address given in Rome in 2004, Abbot Philip Dupont posed this question for us: "Why not ask Gregorian chant to reveal its secret in the languages and in the cultures of our time? . . . Could it not help us to face the challenges of our time? And to lead finally all peoples to sing the wonderful works of God in our own tongues (Acts 2:11)?"[14] The end result of Solesmes's searching can indeed be a beginning for us!

The author of a textbook I used to teach Renaissance vocal counterpoint for a semester, comes to my mind now.[15] The author insists that the student spend time singing some Gregorian chants before beginning to do any of the assigned exercises in melody writing. All this sounded familiar to me, since I knew that Paul Hindemith had insisted that his students in the advanced composition course at Yale University were required to spend a half hour each day singing selections from the Latin chant repertory before beginning their composition assignments. Twentieth-century leaders in the field of music education and composition were still insisting on direct contact with that source of the Western musical tradition. Alas! That is no longer true in our major universities and schools of music since the end of the twentieth century.

Dom Joseph Gajard always remained "the Master of the Word" wherever he taught.

Why all this emphasis on being familiar with the chant repertory? I will let the avant garde composer Pierre Boulez answer that question: "A Gregorian melody is unquestionably more complex than a tonal melody, since its structural pointing is much more subtle. We cannot speak of a 'progress' from monody to polyphony, only of a shifting of interest that enriches one element and impoverishes another."[16]

In my experience, I have found that the complexity of a Gregorian melody is based on something very familiar to all of us: the subtle rhythmic flow that is present in every spoken sentence! Any musician who has tried to preserve the actual rhythms of spoken prose sentences, such as those found in the texts of a Eucharistic Prayer and other ritual texts, and at the same time has tried to put them into modern metrical notation, has found it to be a truly daunting task!

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[13] Eugène Cardine, *An Overview of Gregorian Chant*, tr. Dom Gregory Casprini (Orleans, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 1992), p. 46.

[14] During one of my visits to Solesmes, Dom Saulnier gave me a copy of these remarks made by Abbot Dupont.

[15] Thomas Benjamin, *The Craft of Modal Counterpoint* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979).

[16] Pierre Boulez, *Orientations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 36.

Gregorian chant is vocal music which is absolutely bound to its text.

A composer can come fairly close by using a complex rhythmic notation, as did Rameau for the recitatives in his operas. But that will not be of much help to a celebrant or parish cantor who is not a highly trained professional musician! Using meters and proportional note values to capture the flow of a spoken language is like trying to draw flowing curves with little straight lines. Richard Norton goes to the heart of the question when he states: "[chant] was created for the elevated delivery of religious texts. . . . Through grammatical [sentence] structure, the [melody] was conceived as a whole framework that housed . . . the sentence itself."[17]

Led by Dom Eugène Cardine, the monks of Solesmes have summed up their years of research into the nature of chant in this way:

> Gregorian chant is vocal music which is, above all, absolutely bound to its text. The text is uppermost. The task of the melody is to decorate the text, to interpret it and to help the hearer assimilate it. . . . The structure and inflections of the melody are patterned on the divisions of the text they punctuate, and generally speaking, on the accents of the words themselves.[18]

Later on when dealing with the rhythm of chant, Cardine notes that

> The musical punctuation, indicated by the bar lines of varying sizes, matches the logical divisions of the text. . . . Verbal and melodic phrasings go hand in hand. The text has within itself all the liberty of prose, a liberty which it communicates through the chant. . . . A rigid sense of [metric] symmetry is nowhere to be found.[19]

That research has had an effect on the recent editions of the chant being published by the monks of Solesmes.[20] In 2003, Dom Saulnier, the current editor of *Études grégoriennes*, gave a series of conferences on the Solesmes Method at the abbey of Ligugé. He entitled it: *In the Beginning Was the Word*.[21]

In those sessions, he outlined three stages in the analysis of a piece of Gregorian chant. The first stage is based on the spoken word, for in the spoken word there is already much of what constitutes a melody. There are three levels in studying the spoken word: the syllable, the word, and then the phrase. The second stage is based on an analysis of the modal construction and the shape of the melody. The third and final stage involves the neumes in their earliest forms. For this, the *Graduale Triplex*[22] is an invaluable tool for the chant director in preparing to teach a chant to others. Dom Saulnier goes on to say that all three criteria are needed to produce a truly musical reality.

[17] Richard Norton in *Tonality in Western Culture* (State College, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984), pp. 67–70.

[18] Cardine, *Overview*, p. 5.

[19] Cardine, *Overview*, p. 19.

[20] *Liber Hymnarius* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1983), p. xvi.

[21] Saulnier's sessions on chant rhythm can be found in the original French on the web site <http://palmus.free.fr/#SCG>.

[22] *Graduale Triplex* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1979).

Dom Saulnier explains the decisions he has made in the editing of the new Monastic Antiphonale. In this article he states that all that is necessary for singing these simple antiphons is "first of all, the line of the spoken word followed by the line of the music. There is no longer a need for rhythmic signs, nor for the paleographic neumes, in order to interpret these antiphons. This does not hold for the prolix responses and the graduals. . . . There, the melismatic style and the complexity of the melodic developments demand some reference marks. . . . It is for this reason that the more ornate pieces . . . the *Christus factus* est and the *Haec die*s of Easter are provided with the medieval neumes."[23]

The findings of that research have found their way into recent music history texts such as the following statement:

> It seems appropriate to stress a basic principle which governed the very birth of Gregorian melody: the inseparable unity of neumes and words, which is also an indispensable requirement for a proper performance. The musical phrase was composed to adorn the text, and in this function it lives and shows its full beauty. . . . The tonic syllable is the climax of the phase of movement, while the final syllable represents the harmonious dissipation and eventual disappearance of tension. This is verbal rhythm. Furthermore, the [rhythmic] synthesis required for accurate pronunciation of any pre-tonic syllables and the final syllable can be constructed around the accent.[24]

In other words, the energy contained in the principle accent for a word or phrase controls the flow of a word or a phrase. The syllables before that accent tend to be lighter and flow more quickly toward it. Any syllables after that accent ride on its energy like a car coasting to a stop.

Chant was born long before musical notation arrived on the scene.

Chant was born long before musical notation arrived on the scene. Its melodies were shaped by the rise and fall of speech inflections. Its rhythmic vitality came from the ebb and flow of good dynamic public speaking. For St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville (circa 560–636), rhythm was to be treated as an adjunct of grammar and prosody, a clear sign that for him there was no connection at all between the rhythm of ecclesiastical chant and the quantities of classical Latin. Instead, we find him discussing it in the context of the clerical office of lector where he says:

> Whoever shall be promoted to this [ministerial] grade, will have been imbued with doctrine and reading experience and will be skilled in the knowledge of words [that is to say, their pronunciation] and [their] meaning, so that, with regard to the sense units, [that person] will know where each sense grouping ends, where the discourse should still hang [in the air], where the final sense group closes. . . . Furthermore, [lectors] should know the relative strength of every accent so that [they] will know toward which principle syllable [their] oral proclamation is tending.[25]

[23] Daniel Saulnier, O.S.B., "Un nouvel antiphonaire monastique," *Études grégoriennes*, 33 (2005), 177.

[24] Giulio Cattin, *Music of the Middle Ages, I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 69ff.

[25] Isidore of Seville, *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, Corpus Christianorum, series Latina, 113, (Turnhout, Brepols, 1989), pp.70–72.

As if in a postscript, Isidore next describes the further qualities needed for the office of psalmist/cantor: "[that person] should have the voice quality and the kind of tunes that are congruent with holy religion, not those of the tragic theater but those which show Christian simplicity in their melodic shapes."[26]

What an excellent job description for our lectors and cantors!

This same connection between the spoken word and Gregorian chant is evident again in the first music theory treatises that appear by the middle of the ninth century. One of the first of these, the anonymous *Musica Enchiriadis*, begins its instruction on music with the idea of music as an extension of language. It begins by describing how "sounds" in music are what syllables are in speech: the original and indivisible elements out of which the entire discourse is composed, through successively higher levels of structure. The progression in language from syllables through words, through commas and colons, to sentences is matched by their counterparts in the single notes, figures, and melodic phrases of various lengths and degrees of completeness. Thus, the idea of the unity of speech and song is *fundamental* to all medieval Western notational systems. As late as the year 1100, the textbook *De musica*, attributed to John of Afflighem, makes explicit that the structure of these chant melodies was determined by the structure of their texts, as that can be laid bare by means of the grammatical concepts of comma, colon, and sentence.[27]

The idea of the unity of speech and song is fundamental *to all medieval Western notational systems.*

With the rise of polyphony during the next centuries, the subtle structural pointing of a Gregorian chant melody, based on a freely flowing prose speech rhythm, was exchanged for elongated time values that were made to correspond to groups of notes subdivided into groups of twos and threes in the added melodies.[28] The original chant melody became a mere source of themes to be developed. As Richard Crocker put it: "Gone was the freedom of a single [melodic] line. . . . Music started down a corridor that led from bold simplicity to increasing subtlety and sophistication."[29]

These chant pieces lost their characteristic rhythm when the individual notes were given equal duration. The Gregorian repertory ended up deserving the name that it eventually inherited, that of "plainsong."

Yet, sensitivity to verbal rhythm and sentence structure remained fundamental concerns for the composers of High Renaissance polyphony such as Palestrina, Lassus, and Victoria. Word accentuation is dominant, and phrases flow freely across the bar lines used in modern editions of their works. There is seldom a feel of the "tyranny of the bar line" in their truly contrapuntal sections. The melodic lines and their rhythmic patterns follow the verbal sense of each phrase. In a transcription

[26] Ibid.

[27] Cf. John, *On Music*, Chapter 10, in *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music: Three Medieval Treatises*, tr. Warren Babb, ed. Claude V. Palisca (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 116.

[28] See Boulez, *Orientations*, p. 36.

[29] Richard L. Crocker, *A History of Musical Style* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover, 1986), p. 72.

using 4/2 time, normally nothing less than a half note is used at the articulation of a new syllable. This principle follows the norm found in Gregorian chant: the last note of a neumatic group just before a change of syllable has its duration extended to that of at least a normal syllable to help the singer to articulate the word or phrase effectively.

If you can speak it well, you can sing it well.

Even with the rise of instrumental music during the Baroque era, composers like J.S. Bach and Handel showed great sensitivity to these same elements so evident in the Gregorian repertory. A good illustration of Bach's concern to preserve a sense of non-equal note values is the Chorale Variation IV from his setting of the chorale *O Gott, du Frommer Gott*. Harold Gleason's edition indicates that all the notes are to be played non-legato. The performer must give a slightly different duration to *each* of the notes in each pattern![30]

In the early twentieth century, Arnold Schoenberg attempted to revive some of the speech rhythm and intonation characteristics found in Gregorian chant by inventing a technique he called *Sprechstimme* (speech-song).

For the most part, however, modern composers begin with a particular metrical pattern to which even a prose text must adapt itself. The individual weights of words and syllables are frequently "leveled off" to fit the metric pattern. The conclusions of sense units in the text are sometimes stretched out over several "silent beats" in order to accommodate the beginning of the next sense unit. At other times, these sense units are combined like "run-on sentences" in order to fit the metric pattern. In all these cases, the prose text must adapt itself, as best it can, to the musical setting. To feel this tension between words and music, try saying these texts with your normal speaking voice while keeping the metrical beat with your finger.

The composers of Gregorian chant, on the other hand, normally began with the rhythmic flow and implied inflections of the prose text that they were setting to music. For the most part, the singers needed only to know how a given text would be proclaimed in a vibrant, public manner. Their performance was intended to create a form of "sung speech." They were telling us that if you can speak it well, you can sing it well. This was especially true for the settings for the celebrant, such as the prayer tones and the preface tones. The set of pitches used for these tones seldom went beyond the interval of a fourth or a fifth. These pitch patterns were carefully designed to guide the singer in making appropriate phrasings of the text. The listening assembly found it easy to follow the sense units, since the melodic patterns provided them with a kind of "audible punctuation" of the text. It was taken for granted that not every celebrant would be a great singer, or a well trained musician! The celebrant needed only to apply the techniques learned in good public speaking to the set of pitches used for the opening prayer or the preface of the day.

Not every chant was intended to be sung by everyone. Chants intended for the assembly were hardly more than stylized speech inflections with a rhythm that was inspired by the flow of the phrase or sentence when spoken by a group. Good examples of this would be the settings for the *Sanctus* and the *Agnus Dei* of Mass XVIII, as well as the psalm tone style setting of the *Gloria* for

[30] Harold Gleason, *Method of Organ Playing*, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 104.

Mass XV. The settings of the introits, offertories, and communions were intended for a smaller and better trained group—a "schola." The even more elaborate settings of the gradual and alleluia verses were intended for a well trained soloist. Let each perform only those parts which pertain to them![31]

If chant is the source of Christian ritual music, what are the implications for a composer who uses American English? T.S. Eliot once said, with his mind on the problem of translating from one language to another, that it was in the rhythm of a language, in its natural speech patterns, that the vital national character was expressed.[32]

If chant is the source of Christian ritual music, what are the implications for a composer who uses American English?

Commenting on T.S. Eliot's style of writing, A.D. Moody noted that: "The American tendency . . . is to make more of the vowels by giving them more weight and duration; while the English tend to clip their vowels short with more defined consonants. . . . Even in [Eliot's] latest recordings, made when he had long been resident in England, the weights and lengths of his vowels and the rhythm of his speech are not in the English measure. His versification was always a departure from the iambic pentameter, stretching and contracting the conventional line into another measure altogether, called *vers libre* [free verse] for want of a better name. He did this, presumably, simply by following his own American speech rhythms."[33]

These are characteristics which a composer of ritual music for Christian assemblies that speak American English would do well to take into consideration before putting the first notes on paper.

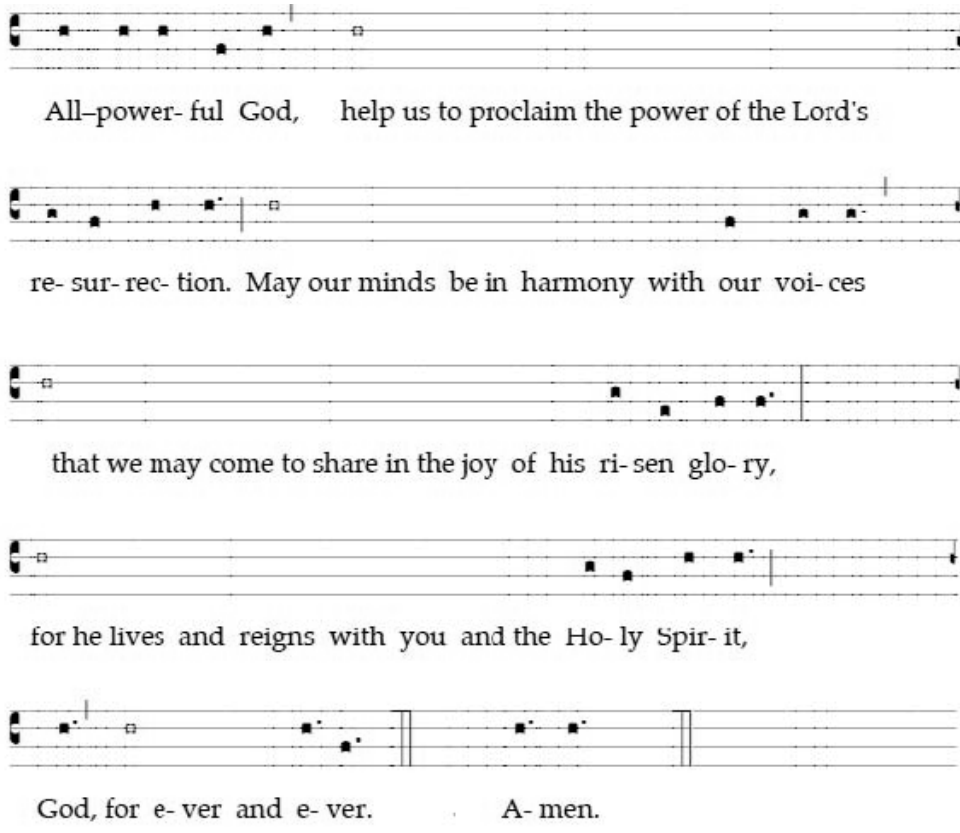
If a picture is worth a thousand words, perhaps a few illustrations would help to clarify how these characteristics of Latin chant could inspire ritual music in American English. The following is a prayer tone that provides "audible punctuation" for the American English prose text of a sample prayer for the Easter season. The melodic patterns attempt to respect and in some way capture, the genius and qualities of the English language that was alluded to by T.S. Eliot. Before singing the prayer with the pitches indicated, try proclaiming aloud the text with a slight "leaning forward" toward the principle word accents and then letting the energy of that accent "ebb away" on any final syllables. The last accent of each phrase should give a sense of "coasting" to the greater or lesser pauses indicated by the sense units of the prayer (see following page).

The earliest forms of Latin responsorial psalmody used a simple pattern for the cantor to intone the verse, to which the assembly responded with a double alleluia refrain. The melodic pattern is expanded by two notes on the typically broadened American accents. The use of what we

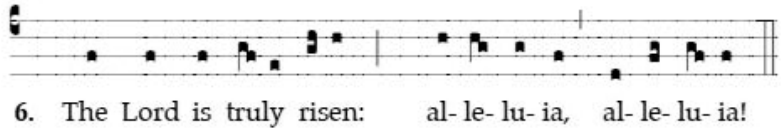
[31] See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶28.

[32] See T.S. Eliot, "A Commentary," in *Criterion*, 14 (1935), 611.

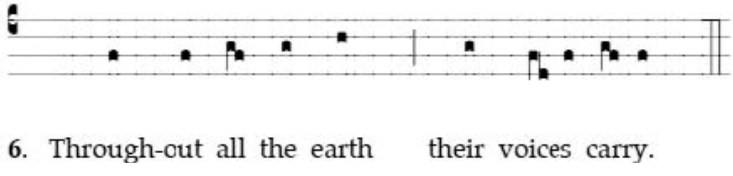
[33] A.D. Moody, "The American Strain," in *The Placing of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Jewel Spears Brocker (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1991), p. 80.



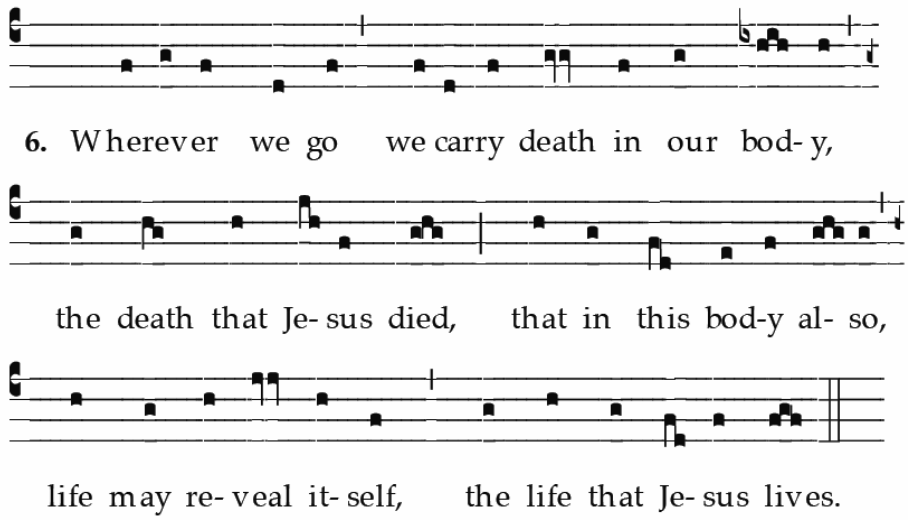
now call melodic anticipations, was a common feature of the Latin chants. They were used to help the voice move smoothly into the next syllable. The melodic range is only that of a fourth—the same range that Lerner and Lowe found useful for the tunes sung by Rex Harrison in the musical *My Fair Lady*! The following example shows how this might be done in American English:



In the next stage of development, the alleluias were replaced by a text to form a complete and independent congregational refrain that could be used by the whole assembly to respond to the verses of the responsorial psalm sung by the cantor. Again, the melodic range is rather narrow, with the entire pattern centering around the cantor's recitation tone:



Finally, these same patterns were expanded to form a complete antiphon that was used to frame the singing of an entire psalm. The melodic range, although expanded, still does not even reach that of an octave. The melody itself is inspired by the flow of the English text and supports the broadening of accents so characteristic of American English:



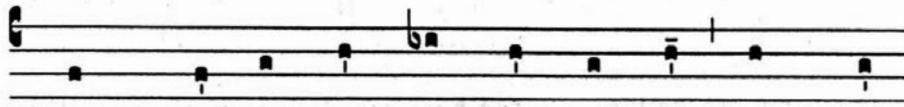
Article 19 in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal reminds us that "preference should be given [in singing] to the more significant parts, especially those to be sung by the priest or ministers with the people responding or those to be sung by the priest and people together." These are all prose texts that need simple ritual music, music that will be a bridge between a simply spoken proclamation and more fully developed song forms. They are not independent, interchangeable pieces added on to our worship. They are texts that embody the heart of every worship service. They need the highlighting that only "sung speech" can give them. As the Abbot of Solesmes has reminded us, by returning to the source of Christian ritual music we can learn much about how we could make these ritually important moments come alive with the genius and qualities of our own American English language.

Pope Benedict XVI has given us the model for our task. As the Word became flesh, so our share in the gift of faith should become music that is transformed into something that shares in the Holy Spirit as we compose and as we sing. That same music when it is sung in our worship, should become the very presence of the risen Christ in those who hear it, so that we all may become one body, one spirit in the glorified Christ.

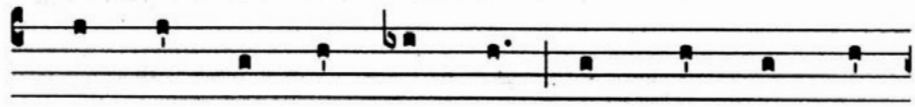
Let me close with the last two stanzas of the Gregorian hymn tune we sing for Sunday Lauds at St. Meinrad (see following page). ℵ

H 2

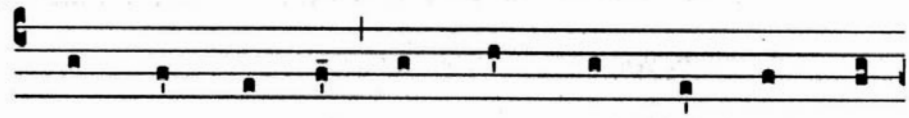
THE FIRST OF ALL THE DAYS OF TIME



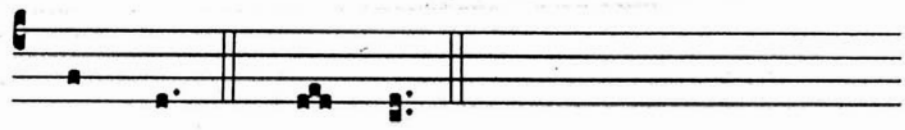
1. The first of all the days of time, The day
2. So we a- rise a- gain, a- lert, Re- newed
3. Your Ho- ly Spir- it gives the words To psalms
4. Grant, lov- ing Fa- ther, what we ask, Ad- dressed



1. that dark- ness lost its dread Be- comes the ev-
2. by sal- u- tar- y sleep To gird our- selves
3. and can- ti- cles we pray; Give us this day
4. to you, his lov- ing Son, Who, with the Spir-



1. er- last- ing day The first- born rose of all
2. for life a- head, Your lov- ing cov- e- nant
3. our dai- ly need To join our hearts to what
4. it Pa- ra- clete, Has ga- thered us to make



1. the dead.
2. to keep.
3. we say.
4. us one. A- men.

Text: *Primo dierum omnium* , Ascr. Gregory the Great. 6c. Tr. St. Meinrad, 1967.
Tune: Plainsong Mode 1. Ambrosian.

REPERTORY

Verdi's Requiem and Benedict's Rule

by Daniel J. Heisey

In 2001, to begin a year commemorating the centenary of Giuseppe Verdi's death, Italy's president, Carlo Ciampi, attended in Parma's cathedral a performance of Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*.[1] It was an emphatic way to begin a celebration. Verdi's Requiem is, to say the least, not "easy listening" music, and in it one finds a lapsed Catholic's passionate struggle with the mystery of faith, and also of doubt's role in the struggle. "If Verdi never developed a sense of the love of God," wrote one critic, "nonetheless he possessed a convincing fear of God."[2] It has become cliché to refer to the Requiem as "Verdi's greatest opera," but as David Rosen has observed, it "lies somewhere between the poles of opera and symphony," adding that no less a critic than Francis Toye saw it as an oratorio.[3] It is worth recalling that at the root of the word "oratorio" is the Latin word for prayer.

At the root of the word "oratorio" is the Latin word for prayer.

As with opera, Verdi's Requiem has the power of catharsis, and it is a jaded listener indeed who comes away from it without even the beginnings of transformation. A good working definition of opera is Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's description of it as "a moulding of fantasy and illusion,"[4] and given that characterization, Verdi's Requiem cannot be classified with Verdi's operas, or even as operatic. Rather, it reveals contours of the ultimate reality. Sacred music is meant to have a role in one's spiritual life, in particular, fortifying the peregrination through this world to the next. This essay will consider the struggle of ongoing conversion, so profoundly communicated by Verdi's Requiem and discursively described in the monastic rule of Benedict of Nursia, a guide for more and more lay people.[5] Both Verdi's Requiem and Benedict's rule affirm the precarious nature of the soul's daily struggle, an aspect of the spiritual life we will explore below.

First, though, we must acknowledge that Verdi's Requiem, as with such works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Gabriel Fauré, may not now be experienced by Roman Catholics within an

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1 Joseph Harriss, "Very Verdi," *Smithsonian*, 32, no. 11 (November, 2001), 98.

2 Benjamin Ivry, "*De Profundis*: Verdi's Searing *Requiem*," *Commonweal*, 128, no. 11 (June 1, 2001), 21.

3 David Rosen, *Verdi: Requiem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 89–90.

4 Kiri Te Kanawa, with Conrad Wilson, *Opera for Lovers* (London: Headline, 1996), p. 239.

5 Dwight Longenecker, "St. Benedict and the Wood-Chopping Way," *National Catholic Register*, 85, no. 32 (13–19 September, 2009), 7; Joel Rippinger, "Bare Ruined Choirs," *Commonweal*, 135, no. 4 (29 February, 2008), 46.

Without contradicting papal or conciliar instruction, Catholics may use Verdi's Requiem for private meditation and edification.

ordinary liturgical context. Since 1903, with Pope Pius X's Motu Proprio, *Tra le Sollecitudini*, orchestral compositions based upon liturgical texts are not to be used during a typical Mass. Notable exceptions have been funerals or memorial services for public figures, such as that in January, 1964, in Boston for President John F. Kennedy.[6] The state of music used in Catholic churches around 1900 is beyond the scope of this brief essay, but suffice it to say that Pius X wanted to avoid the ever-changing taste in secular music influencing the music of the church. He may have meant to refer to operatic compositions, but with one exception he steered clear of naming a particular composer. Robert Greenberg believed that in this motu proprio Pius X had condemned Verdi's Requiem, albeit waiting two years after Verdi's death to do so,[7] but the only composer Pius X mentioned by name, and that favorably, was Palestrina. Even so, Greenberg is right that the kind of music the pope sought to promote clearly was not that of Verdi's Requiem; instead, Pius X endorsed the liturgical use of Gregorian chant. Pius X, expanding his range, believed that Renaissance music of the kind written by Palestrina pleasantly complemented Gregorian chant.

Still, Pius X would have been aware of Verdi and his music. As did Wagner in the newly imperial Germany, Verdi dominated the musical scene of the recently united Italy. Greenberg may be right that even Pius X would have paused before crossing swords with a national treasure such as Verdi, although the pope had no qualms confronting the modernist intelligentsia of the day. George Martin correctly noted that "all of Verdi's published sacred works fall foul of the requirements [of the motu proprio] in some way, but this probably would have neither surprised nor disturbed him as there is no evidence that he wrote them for use in churches."[8] Unfortunately, Martin undermined his astute observation by declaring that "Motu Proprio" was the title of the pope's document, a title Martin said "can be translated as 'on the proper form.'"[9]

Although a motu proprio, taken on a pope's own initiative, carries different weight than other papal documents, such as an apostolic constitution or an encyclical letter, Pius X's teaching favoring chant over orchestration recurred in Pius XII's Encyclical Letter, *Mediator Dei* (1947), and then in the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963). Also, in 2003 Pope John Paul II commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of *Tra le Sollecitudini*. Thus, throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the steadily developing articulation of the musical sense of the church returned to an early and longstanding practice of liturgical chant. As one scholar has noted, the principles of *Tra le Sollecitudini*, while not quoted explicitly, were nevertheless taken for granted by the bishops at the most recent church council.[10] Without contradicting papal or

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[6] Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), pp. 29–31.

[7] Robert Greenberg, *The Life and Operas of Verdi*, Course Guidebook (Chantilly, Va.: The Teaching Company, 2003), p. 199.

[8] George Martin, *Verdi: His Music, Life and Times* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963), p. 586.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Michael J. Miller, "St. Pius X on Sacred Music," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, 104, no. 2 (February 2004), 14.

conciliar instruction, however, Catholics and others may use Verdi's Requiem for private meditation and edification.

Various commercial recordings of Verdi's Requiem exist, and one assumes their easy availability.[11] Verdi's Requiem was first performed in the spring of 1874, and at the time people were surprised to learn that Verdi, an ardent republican and anti-clericalist, had written a Requiem Mass. Verdi had long experienced a rocky relationship with the church, dating from his time as an altar boy. One day the priest grew impatient with young Giuseppe's inattentiveness while serving Mass and kicked him, causing the boy to fall down the steps of the altar. The boy had been entranced by the organ music. During his adult career Verdi was ever exasperated by ecclesiastical censors who vetoed what they deemed to be religiously objectionable aspects of his operas. So, for example, in *Attila* (1846), Saint Leo the Great became "Leone, an Old Roman." When in his early sixties Verdi volunteered to write a Requiem Mass, he did so to honor the memory of modern Italy's greatest literary figure, Alessandro Manzoni, who had died in May, 1873. Verdi's Requiem had its premiere to mark the first anniversary of Manzoni's death.

Verdi had long experienced a rocky relationship with the church.

For Italy's cultural unification, Manzoni had served in literature the same role Verdi had done in music. Manzoni gave the emerging political unit a shared verbal idiom, Verdi a musical one. Thus, Verdi's composition was one great artist's tribute to another and heralded no sudden conversion or reconciliation between him and the church. As Verdi's wife, Giuseppina, had said of him, "I won't say [he's] an atheist, but [he's] certainly not much of a believer," and she compared Manzoni, a deeply pious man, and Verdi, "happy not believing in anything," yet living a strictly moral life.[12] Throughout his long career, Verdi often complained about the demands of producing operas on deadline, but writing the Requiem seems to have given Verdi some kind of inner peace. In March, 1874, Verdi commented on his work on this homage to Manzoni: "I have done nothing but write note after note," he said, "to the greater glory of God. . . . Now the music is done, and I am happy to have written it."[13]

As planned, it was performed at Milan's church of San Marco, although priests in the archdiocesan chancery were uneasy about such a spectacle. The completed work called for more than two hundred performers, fairly evenly divided between orchestra and chorus, thus leading to obvious comparisons with grand opera. Moreover, this parallel was reinforced because the soloists came from the operatic stage, and because the second performance was at Milan's opera house, La Scala. It should be noted that Verdi specified for himself a simple funeral Mass, without flowers or music but with "two priests, two candles, and one cross."[14]

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[11] For example, most recently on the EMI and LSO labels: Stephen Francis Vasta, "Verdi: Requiem," *Opera News*, 74, no. 8 (February 2010), 58–59; William R. Braun, "Verdi: Requiem," *Opera News*, 74, no. 6 (December 2009), 68–69.

[12] Quoted in Mary Jane Phillips-Matz, *Verdi: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 601.

[13] Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, 607; see also Barbara Meier, *Verdi*, trans. Rosemary Smith (London: Haus Publishing, 2003), pp. 115–117.

[14] Phillips-Matz, *Verdi*, p. 763.

That restrained element in Verdi's character, based upon his almost physical need for privacy and seclusion, occurs also in his Requiem. Although it is famous for its roaring cascade of sound recurring throughout the *Dies irae*, the Requiem has subtler moments as well. It begins and ends with hushed reverence, the prayer for eternal rest and perpetual light being offered in whispered tones. When in the *Libera me* the soprano's words are repeated almost *sotto voce* by the chorus, it is reminiscent of a lady leading the bereft in the recitation of the rosary at a vigil service. More pertinent to a discussion of Verdi, it brings to mind portions of the alternating soprano solo and chorus of the *Miserere* in *Il Trovatore*.

It is this permeating, passionate prayer that makes the Requiem closer kin to the oratorio than the opera.

These more subdued, if not serene, parts of the Requiem are but respites, oases amidst the scorching desert; deeply defining the work are the piercing trumpets of the Sanctus, worthy of a march for *Aida*, or the thundering timpani of the *Dies irae*, recalling the frantic, confrontational duets in *Don Carlo*. As with *Aida*, the Requiem has martial urgency; as with *Don Carlo*, the orchestra serves as more than accompaniment, being like an essential voice alongside the singers. Unlike *Aida* and *Don Carlo*, however, the Requiem does not indulge in anti-clericalism and show priests as sinister agents. It is possible, though, to see the Requiem as a strange kind of duet, one in which one party (in this case, God) seems to remain frustratingly silent.

A full forty minutes of Verdi's Requiem consists of the *Dies irae*, thirteenth-century Latin words pleading that the devastating horrors of the Day of Wrath may be spared the soul of the faithful departed. Verdi sets that medieval text to relentless, jolting music, harrowing the listener into making the plea immediate and personal. Verdi's *Dies irae* dominates if not defines his Requiem, suffusing the work with voluminous, impassioned prayer that exceeds the prayerful, lamenting interlude (if one dare call such a chorus by that name) that is the "Va pensiero" of *Nabucco*. It is this permeating, passionate prayer that makes the Requiem closer kin to the oratorio than the opera. Here we remember our earlier point that at the root of "oratorio" is the Latin word for prayer.

In the *Dies irae* the penitent addresses God directly, not through intercessory saints or angels. Although the *Dies irae* itself may have been written by a Franciscan friar, Thomas of Celano, in the thirteenth century, this desire directly to beseech divine mercy despite one's sins seems to derive from the eleventh century and the spiritual writings of a Benedictine monk, Saint Anselm of Canterbury.[15] Medieval spiritual writers built upon the foundation set down by generations of predecessors, and so Saint Anselm's prayers will lead us to relevant passages in the Rule of Benedict.

In the introduction to her edition of Anselm's Prayers and Meditations, Benedicta Ward wrote that the aim of his prayers "is to stir the mind out of its inertia to know itself thoroughly and so come to contrition and the love of God."[16] As with the penitential psalms, Anselm's prayers are

[15] Rosalind Brooke and Christopher Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe, 1000–1300* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), pp. 152–153; see also William R. Cook and Ronald B. Herzman, *The Medieval World View: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 85.

[16] Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm with the Proslogion* (New York: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 51.

meant to pierce the heart that should be dedicated to God. That heart hardens, however, and needs to be broken open once again to receive the converting grace of God. Of Anselm's nineteen prayers, one may stand for the point to be made. Anselm composed a brief prayer to God imploring His mercy and grace. "Give me heart-piercing goodness and humility," Anselm begs, "discerning abstinence and mortification of the flesh."[17] The prayer concludes with the penitent sinner asking to be delivered from evil and led to eternal life. It is a theme found throughout the *Dies irae*.

Just as Anselm's prayers may have an echo more than a hundred years later in Thomas of Celano's (if his it be) *Dies irae*, Anselm's spirituality grows from the sixth-century's Rule of Benedict. Thus, one can see continuity between the patristic period and the medieval world: Saint Anselm of Canterbury is sometimes hailed as "the Last of the Fathers." The Benedictine rule he followed owed much to sacred scripture, notably the psalms, and so continuity extends back further and farther in space and time, thousands of years, from Saint Anselm's northwestern Europe to King David's southwestern Asia.

One can see continuity between the patristic period and the medieval world.

For the layperson (an oblate) or vowed religious following the Rule of Benedict, Verdi's Requiem can relate especially to Chapters Four and Seven of the Rule. Certain editions of the rule, such as the bilingual text prepared by an English Benedictine, Justin McCann, are set up for daily reading; by following that pattern, someone may encounter each section of the rule three times a year. As with hearing of a piece of music only once, one reading of the rule has little effect towards interior change.

In particular, let us consider the passages in these two chapters of the rule about fearing God and fearing damnation. In chapter four of his rule, Saint Benedict listed "Tools for Good Works," applicable to our theme being: "To fear the Day of Judgement; To dread hell; To desire eternal life with all spiritual longing; To keep death daily before one's eyes."[18] In chapter seven, Benedict addressed humility, a virtue he described as having twelve levels or gradations. The very first step resonates with Verdi's Requiem. "[K]eep the fear of God before [one's] eyes," wrote Benedict, adding, "remember all the commandments of God, and how hell will burn for their sins those that despise him."[19] Benedict further reminded his reader that God constantly watches everyone, and meanwhile the angels, as God's messengers, ceaselessly report to God about one's actions. Benedict based his teaching on the wisdom literature of the Bible, and in chapter seven especially he quoted Psalms, Proverbs, and Sirach on the fear of the Lord leading to wisdom.

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[17] Ward, *Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, p. 91.

[18] Justin McCann, ed. and trans., *The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English* (London: Burns Oates, 1952), p. 29.

[19] McCann, *Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 39.

In recent centuries, some monastic authors would argue,[20] these concerns have tended to hinder spiritual growth, fear of God and of Hell creating cowering souls more worried about sin than aware of God's love. In his youth Verdi, son of rural innkeepers, may have absorbed some such peasant Jansenism, but just as a good regimen of diet and exercise may be abused and thus harm the body, so too in the spiritual life, misuse of sound discipline does not negate its value. At least within the North Atlantic hegemony, sophisticated opinion would prefer that anxiety about divine wrath was an awkward phase the human race has grown out of. Nevertheless, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (¶1033–1037) reminds the faithful that Hell and being condemned to it by one's choice of sinful acts are realities still recognized by the church. "Our dread of punishment," observed Hubert Van Zeller, "need not be morbid to be true."[21]

As anyone wise in the ways of human relationships will say, we are right to be afraid of being so self-centered as to drive away the one we love. A fortiori, then we must be on guard not to let our selfishness exile us from God. The monastic cure prescribed by writers like Saint Benedict is to keep quiet and keep busy: endless talk about the problem tends to be solipsistic rather than therapeutic; idle hands are no help, either. In place of one's dialogue, whether internal or external, Benedict sets scripture and insists upon silence as the space in which God's fruitful word can best flourish. "Sinful human speech thus eliminated," wrote Adalbert de Vogüé, "is replaced by the word of God, which leads to prayer, repentance, and conversion."[22] It has been the purpose of this paper to discuss how Verdi's Requiem can help, within the framework of the Benedictine rule, to strengthen and enrich one's ongoing conversion.

The spiritual benefits of listening to Verdi's Requiem await anyone open to them.

The spiritual benefits of listening to Verdi's Requiem await anyone open to them. Someone familiar with the spiritual heritage of the Benedictine rule may derive further dimensions from Verdi's great work. Benedict's rule requires one who takes it seriously to face oneself honestly, and Verdi's Requiem forces upon the receptive listener unflinching confrontation of one's possible eternal fate. Benedict enjoins his follower to spend a lot of time with sacred scripture, and Verdi's Requiem, using texts from the Mass, abounds with phrases and passages of scripture. Verdi's frank, vigorously masculine approach should not surprise, for Verdi wrote "with such muscularity and sparkle, and with such a weary understanding of the strange ways of powerful men (and seductive women),"[23] that this perspective that permeated his operas would surely flow through his sacred compositions as well.

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[20] For example, Terrence G. Kardong, *Pillars of Community: Four Rules of Pre-Benedictine Monastic Life* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2010), p. 18.

[21] Hubert Van Zeller, *The Holy Rule: Notes on St. Benedict's Legislation for Monks* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958), p. 68.

[22] Adalbert de Vogüé, *Reading Saint Benedict: Reflections on the Rule*, trans. Colette Friedlander, Cistercian Studies Series 151 (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1994), p. 62.

[23] James Naughtie, "My History Hero: Giuseppe Verdi," *BBC History* (June 2007), 98.

A recent biographer of Verdi has speculated that Verdi's Requiem "may suit a post-Christian age because it now strikes Christians as dubious,"[24] the piece's unavoidable fear of the fires of Hell seeming, as we have noted above, to comfortable turn-of-the-millennium Christians as gauche. As this essay has tried to point out, however, Verdi's Requiem is relevant today for a Christian's, especially a Catholic Christian's, spiritual growth. Whether he intended it to be so, Verdi's Requiem can encourage a spirit of penance and thus prayer. What may strike some Christians (and others) as a paradox, a healthy fear of God, receives direction from Verdi's Requiem. As with a recording of Gregorian chant, a compact disc of Verdi's Requiem can help give form and voice to one's prayer when the spiritual life seems to put one in the place of the pelican in the wilderness.[25]

When one makes the time to become immersed in the plangent reverberation of Verdi's Requiem, one finds expression given to the feeling of "wrestling with the angel,"[26] and even if that struggle has not yet been one's own, Verdi can help one be aware that others, even great musicians, have known much the same inner turmoil. Perhaps it will turn one's thoughts to the suffering and sacrifice of the Cross, the means of human redemption. If nothing else, one may meditate upon and learn from Verdi's maturity and humility in writing sacred music in memory of a religious man. While Verdi may not have put much stock in the Mass as a prayer for the repose of someone's soul, he understood that a devout man like Manzoni, however refined, would have appreciated a Mass more than an aria.

It remains, then, to ask what role sacred music in general has not only for prayerful men like Manzoni, but also skeptical men like Verdi. Today there seem to be, at least in English-speaking countries, more people who want to believe than people who believe firmly and truly, to draw a phrase from John Henry Newman. Samuel Johnson said of music, "If it softens the mind so as to prepare it for the reception of salutary feelings, it may be good: but inasmuch as it is melancholy per se, it is bad."[27] As does Benedict's rule, filled with psalms and Ambrosian chant, Verdi's Requiem can prepare one for receiving "salutary feelings," in this case about one's right relationship with God. One gets Verdi's Requiem and Benedict's rule wrong if one regards them merely as relics of panic and fear, the writing and writhing of insecure men terrified of falling into the hands of an angry God.

One can search deep in the scriptural and patristic roots of Christian spirituality for insight into Verdi and his Catholic heritage, but the key comes most clearly from the Middle Ages, when Christians feared not God, but their sins that would cut them off from God's love. God's uncompromising judgment, for there can be no compromise with sin and evil, would forever bar one from the joys of the heavenly banquet. "For terror or ferocity or images of pain," wrote Henry Adams, "the art of the twelfth century had no use except to give a higher value to their images of love."[28] Verdi, for all his skepticism and anti-clericalism, lived and worked within a culture shaped by the legacy of centuries of Catholic life and worship. During his time here on Earth, Verdi saw only too clearly the human face of the Church, but his Requiem suggests that in his heart he hoped some day to see the very face of God. ℣

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[24] John Rosselli, *The Life of Verdi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 162.

[25] Ps. 102:6.

[26] Gen. 32:24.

[27] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 2 vols. (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1906; reprint, 1941), vol. 2, p. 331.

[28] Henry Adams, *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), p. 310.

REVIEWS

Jewish Culture and the Organ

by William Tortolano

The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture by Tina Frühauf. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 284 pp. ISBN# 978-19-533706-8

Book reviews come and go. But every once in a while we are overwhelmed with a title that captures our attention. *The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture?* The topic is unusual and provocative. Does the Jewish liturgy (service) use the organ? Is there a repertoire of distinctive music for this instrument? Why Germany? Once the first page is opened, it is difficult to put the book down.

Tina Frühauf is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music at Brooklyn College and editor at *Repertoire International de Littérature Musicale* in New York. It is a "groundbreaking and engaged study" that chronicles the fascinating presence of the organ in Jewish culture from its references in antiquity, the Talmud, and other scriptural sources, to vivid illuminated miniatures, engravings, and a plethora of unusual references. There is also a recurrent dichotomy: Is it allowed or not?

The peripatetic organ passage did not find a solid footing until the German Enlightenment, which gave birth to the Jewish Reform Movement. Perhaps it was necessary to amalgamate a Jewish culture and society to a more liberal home, and to bring it up to date—a kind of precursor of Vatican II and "aggiornamento," or perhaps it was the economic reality of adjusting to a contemporary German Catholic and Protestant culture. Whatever the reason, the nineteenth century and the twentieth up to Kristallnacht (and the horrors of an attempt to eradicate Jewish culture, faith, and life itself), was a period of great music making. During and after World War II, it was to be transferred, in particular to the United States. Here, Jewish synagogue musicians and composers would continue a vibrant musical life.

Whatever the reason, the nineteenth century and the twentieth was a period of great music making.

Many of us are perhaps familiar with a few Jewish composers, Ernest Bloch in the *Four Wedding Marches* (not very Jewish sounding!) and Herman Berlinksi in *The Burning Bush*. But there is much more, and Frühauf provides not only illuminating footnotes, but an excellent bibliography and most important, a fine list of published sources for organ music.

William Tortolano is Professor Emeritus of Fine Arts/Music, Saint Michael's College, Colchester, Vermont.

What makes the book of particular relevance to me personally is that it pays tribute to the esteemed German composer, pianist and organist, Heinrich Schalit. This enlightened artist was my introduction and beacon to Gregorian chant. I attended a high school in Providence, Rhode Island that was about sixty percent Jewish. One of my good friends was a son of Mr. Schalit. "Would you like to meet my father?" Of course! He was a pupil of the famous pianist and teacher, Theodor Leschetizky, as was my piano teacher. Schalit was organist at a large Reform Temple.

I had been a boy chorister, sang chant (by rote), and knew little about it. Herr Schalit said to me, "Do you know the *Liber Usualis*?" I had to admit that this fifteen year old did not. "Oh", he said, "you must study it and sing it. I am Jewish, but it has a special place with my Jewish music. After all, we gave Gregorian chant its birth!" This was my introduction to Gregorian chant and a lifelong study and devotion.

This book challenges us to enrich our cultural horizons and to better appreciate the bonds of mutual, musical respect.

Frühauf pays great tribute to Heinrich Schalit—and many more composers and musicians.

What must have made the author's research unusual was not only archives of organ builders and collections by Jewish musicians, but interviews, whenever possible, of any remaining survivors or their descendents, about musical life in Germany and its reemergence, particularly in the United States. There are many illustrations, including some in full color, as well as a catalog of over two hundred organ dispositions. But best, is an excellent catalog of Jewish music for organ.

This is an unusual book. It challenges us to enrich our cultural horizons and to better appreciate the bonds of mutual, musical respect.

The Modern History of a Revival

by Jeffrey Tucker

Musica Sacra: Music at Mass, A Liturgical and Pastoral Challenge. Edited by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments; translated by Michael J. Miller. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-1586173012

Looking back, it seems that the current revival in Gregorian chant had something to do with a conference on sacred music in Vatican City, December 5, 2005. Yes, this was only five years ago, and yet the world of Catholic music seems very different today.

I recall the event very well. The conference featured many learned speakers, among whom was Monsignor Valentino Miserachs Grau, president of the Pontifical Institute for Sacred Music. The speech made the headlines and it provided dramatic encouragement to a movement that, when seen from today's perspective, seems to have been only in its infancy.[1]

Msgr. Grau said:

> Gregorian chant sung by the assembly not only can be restored—it must be restored, together with the chanting of the schola and the celebrants, if a return is desired to the liturgical seriousness, sound form, and universality that should characterize any sort of liturgical music worthy of the name, as Saint Pius X taught and John Paul II repeated, without altering so much as a comma. How could a bunch of insipid tunes stamped out according to the models of the most trivial popular music ever replace the nobility and robustness of the Gregorian melodies, even the most simple ones, which are capable of lifting the hearts of the people up to heaven?
>
> We have undervalued the Christian people's ability to learn; we have almost forced them to forget the Gregorian melodies that they knew, instead of expanding and deepening their knowledge, including through proper instruction on the meaning of the texts. And instead, we have stuffed them full of banalities. By cutting the umbilical cord of tradition in this manner, we have deprived the new composers of liturgical music in the living languages—assuming, without conceding, that they have sufficient technical preparation—of the indispensable "humus" for composing in harmony with the spirit of the Church.

Gregorian chant sung by the assembly not only can be restored —it must be restored.

Jeffrey Tucker is managing editor of Sacred Music. sacredmusic@musicasacra.com. This review appeared in *The Wanderer*, 143, no. 46 (Nov. 18, 2010).

[1] This address was published here: Valentino Miserachs Grau, "Gregorian Chant: the Possibilities and Conditions for a Revival," *Sacred Music*, 132, no. 4 (2005), 20–23.

> We have undervalued—I insist—the people's ability to learn. It is obvious that not all of the repertoire is suitable for the people: this is a distortion of the rightful participation that is asked of the assembly, as if, in the matter of liturgical chant, the people should be the only protagonist on the stage. We must respect the proper order of things: the people should chant their part, but equal respect should be shown for the role of the schola, the cantor, the psalmist, and, naturally, the celebrant and the various ministers, who often prefer not to sing. As John Paul II emphasized in his recent chirograph: "From the good coordination of all—the celebrating priest and the deacon, the acolytes, ministers, lectors, psalmist, 'schola cantorum', musicians, cantor, and assembly—emerges the right spiritual atmosphere that makes the moment of the liturgy intense, participatory, and fruitful" [¶8].(pp. 121–2)

Remarkably strong words! We hadn't really heard anything like this from such a high position in the Vatican. The words seem to kick off a momentum that has not stopped.

At last—and this is a testament to how quickly the times are moving forward—a proceedings volume is published under the title *Musica Sacra: A Liturgical and Pastoral Challenge* from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. It contains papers of great weight, most of which I had not seen and which were specially translated for this volume. Authors include Dom Philippe Dupont, Martin Baker,[2] Cardinal Domenico Sorrentino, Louis-André Naud, Giordano Monzio Compagnoni, and John Paul II with his chirograph on sacred music. Each offers something significant.

Every advocate of sacred music at every level of the church should regard this book as seminal.

Taken as a whole, this is a wonderful book that provides something of a background on what is happening today. The rationale, theology, and practical application of sacred music are all here. The papers in total sound a clarion call. It is impossible to say that this conference sparked the current movement; perhaps the movement's time had just come. Regardless, every advocate of sacred music at every level of the church should regard this book as seminal.

It is not unusual for a conference volume to be in production for five years. What is unusual is to find a conference volume that so perfectly foresees and defines a moment in the history of art and faith.

Two chapters deserve some special additional commentary.

Dom Philippe Dupont, the Abbot of Solesmes, offers a powerful piece in "Gregorian Chant: Its Present State and Prospects." He begins by recounting the enormous progress that chant has made within the academy in Europe, particularly in France and Germany (politely bypassing the problem in parishes). This academic progress is worthy of high praise. However, he cautions that chant should not be relegated to an academic niche:

[2] Martin Baker's address was published here as "The Role of the Choir in the Celebration of the Liturgy: Notes on the Experience at Westminster Cathedral," *Sacred Music*, 135, no. 4 (2008), 8–13.

> Gregorian chant is not the music of a particular group in the Church, a sort of club of one spirituality, school, or interpretation, or rite (sometimes Latin and Gregorian chant have been associated with the use of the missal of Saint Pius V). The interventions of the Church's Magisterium since the Council have confirmed that Gregorian chant maintains its place of honor in liturgical celebrations. (p. 130)

He asks a very relevant question:

> What sort of song besides Gregorian chant can allow all the faithful of the Latin Church to proclaim their faith together in the Credo or to pray in the same language the Pater noster? This chant is a magnificent sign of unity. (p. 130)

He further illustrates chant's merits:

> The distinguishing feature of Gregorian chant is its unparalleled service to the word of God in close connection with the liturgical celebration itself. . . . Gregorian chant clothes the word of God with contemplative melody. These melodies, we should recall, were born in the liturgy and for it. They are meant to be wedded to the word of God. (p. 131)

This extremely practical paper then moves to what Dom Dupont considers two "stumbling blocks" to future progress. I quote the first one in full because, in my view, this is serious matter.

> The first is competition between schools of interpretation. Instead of contributing to an improvement in the quality of the chant, this leads in some cases to rivalries or mutual snubbing. Besides the damage that this does to unity—of which Gregorian chant ought to be a sign, as I mentioned earlier—these quarrels end up discrediting Gregorian chant. (p. 132)

These quarrels have been around for the better part of the century, with each camp claiming to have discovered the Rosetta Stone for the perfect rendering of chant. Two main competitors for the title going back many decades are of course the old Mocquereau school and the new Cardine school (sometimes shortened as Old Solesmes vs. Semiology) but there are many gradients within these broad strokes. The original proponents of these approaches were not nearly as dogmatic as their followers, but as time went on, the camps became ever more divided.

Gregorian chant is not the music of a particular group in the Church, a sort of club of one spirituality, school or interpretation or rite.

I once had the impression, as many novices do, that it was somehow necessary to choose between them, though I was hardly intellectually prepared to do so. It was many years before I came to realize that these two schools hardly exhaust all possibilities. Each monastic tradition has its own style and approach, some preferring and some rejecting rhythmic signs, equalist renderings, particular interpretations of certain neumes, and the like.

In some ways, none of this would be surprising in any musical field. There are as many interpretations and understandings of Bach as there are serious musicians who play Bach. So it is with

the chant, as Guido d'Arezzo's own pupils reported of the eleventh-century diversity in chant styles. We can learn from many approaches, surely. That is not to say that there is not a role for scholarship and ever more subtle understandings of the manuscripts, but, as Dom Dupont suggests, these differences should not be used as a means of fueling acrimony and mutual recrimination.

Whenever I hear these interpretive rivalries being aired today in public forums, I want to invite any of the speakers into the reality of parish life and let them hear what is actually being sung and played. Clearly this is not the time for such divisions. Dom Dupont is certainly right to regard these competitive rivalries as a source for the discrediting of chant. Tolerance of other approaches is to be cultivated. My strong impression is that in the last five years, and since Dom Dupont's essay was written, these rivalries have lessened, as they inevitably will with the expansion of the ranks of chanters and as younger generations get more involved with chant. The tribal loyalties of the previous generation fade from memory.

Dom Dupont goes on to mention a second stumbling block:

> The weak support and meager encouragement that these choirs sometimes complain of receiving from the parish clergy. It may even happen that they experience genuine opposition to Gregorian chant, which is thought to be outmoded, "traditionalist," or else a kind of concert that does not foster the participation of the faithful, whereas these choirs want nothing else than to sing a liturgical chant of the quality that is recommended by the Church. (p. 132)

The problem is such a serious one that he wonders

> whether the specific directives issued, for example, by the Congregation for Divine Worship might not stimulate the clergy to integrate Gregorian chant better into parish liturgical celebrations. (p. 132)

Again, complete agreement on my part. I receive weekly notes of tragedies at the parish level: scholas thwarted, directors fired, singers harassed, and whole programs once highly developed being brutally abolished by a new pastor who knows and cares nothing about the liturgical value of chant. One might think a remedy were at hand, but there is none that I know of. What the pastor says goes, and after him the deluge. Perhaps Dom Dupont is right that directives are in order.

Tolerance of other approaches is to be cultivated.

The second paper I want to mention deserves more discussion than I can provide here. It is "Sacred Music and Participation" by Louis-Andre Naud. It is not a revisionist account of what constitutes participation but rather a highly conventional account of the Liturgical Movement's emphasis on the people's experience at Mass and its supposed culmination in our time.

The paper lacks the subtlety that one might expect. It is written by a theologian rather than a musician so the reader senses a naïveté that comes from a romantic view of people joined in song during liturgy, without considering the downside to an unbalanced emphasis on audible musical participation, namely 1) the subtle devaluing of the schola's contribution, 2) the inevitable dumbing

down of music to the lowest common denominator, and 3) the eventual demoralization of the people as they face a bewildering set of demands that they sing music of every style and with texts that have nothing to do with the task at hand.

Naud's paper ends with the striking observation that these precise problems are the biggest ones that confront us today in the parish context, without ever connecting this grim reality back to the unbalanced prescription that the people sing everything and nearly anything humanly possible.

He writes:

> in some places the congregation has stopped singing so as to listen to the choir and the principal celebrant. The congregation no longer has the cantors needed to guide the singing. . . . It no longer has the strength to adapt to the excessively wide variety of songs, even the popular ones. The people still have good faith, but the lack of personnel qualified in liturgy and sacred music leads them to be content with the simplest solutions.

He adds a line that made me laugh: "the liturgical assembly is also a motley crowd, particularly in celebrations of marriage, baptisms, and funerals." (p. 117)

This conclusion is actually a devastating indictment of the very thing he recommends, though he seems unaware of this. When he writes "in some places" he might have said "nearly all." In parishes where *participation* is the rallying cry we see hordes of depressed people who can barely bring themselves to pick up that sorry excuse for a hymnal that sits in the pews, and their singing amounts to pretending to barely open their mouths, and otherwise glare at the amateurs on the altar who are hectoring people to join in singing some silly ditty. The music professionals are long gone, driven out from our parishes after being told that they have nothing to contribute except as campfire-song leaders.

The music professionals are long gone, driven out from our parishes after being told that they have nothing to contribute except as campfire-song leaders.

A rule we can observe across the entire Catholic landscape: the more emphasis that is put on participation in everything by the people, the less participation there will be. On the other hand, if all things are in their place—the schola sings the propers, the priest sings his parts, and people sing the ordinary chants of the Mass and not some made-up thing from outside the Mass—we do indeed observe participation. It is a paradox with an easy explanation. This is what Catholics are to do, and what the church asks Catholics to do, and the Catholic people sense this in their heart of hearts, while resisting artifice, manipulation, and ideologically driven agendas that contradict the sense of the faith.

Professor Naud's paper seems to miss all this completely. On the upside, however, his recounting of the history here does highlight (however inadvertently) many mistakes along the way.

COMMENTARY

Modeling for Directors

by Mary Jane Ballou

When I talk about modeling in choral directing, there are no Dior turns or runways required. No need to summon your inner fashionista. Instead, modeling is a pedagogical method that prefers demonstration to description. You can model the way you want your choir to sound through gestures, through playing performances by other ensembles, with graphics, by singing the line the way you wish it to sound, and through metaphor and hyperbole. A quick Google search on "modeling in music education" will yield an ample supply of scholarly and practical information on the subject. My purpose is to pique your interest.

Conductors traditionally communicate with the choir through conducting gestures to cue entries and shape the melodic line. However, we often find that our "signals" are either ignored or completely misunderstood by our singers. When that happens, the temptation for directors is to talk. We try to "talk" our singers into the desired outcome. And we spend a lot of time doing that. A study found that forty percent of the rehearsal time for choruses was spent in speech. Sad to say, the one who's wasting the time is generally the director.

I'm talking about our futile attempts to convince the sopranos to lighten up, the altos to sing gracefully, the tenors to cease warbling, and the basses to find the right notes and sing in the octave we have in mind. When dealing with a volunteer choir, we often make our corrections indirectly to avoid singling out difficult singers. This expands the "talk ratio" and rarely fixes that problem in the second row. Directors often find themselves chattering to the choir about the music because they are frustrated—frustrated with seemingly irreparable intonation problems, persistent sluggish rhythms, and their own inability to get things moving forward. Here is where modeling can help. It replaces our exhortations with other forms of imagery and communication.

Instead of telling the singers what to do, *show* them what to do. You can do this in several ways. Draw shape of the musical line with your hand. Demonstrate the line for your singers, making sure that you sing it both correctly and beautifully. If you have an excellent singer and are not afraid of jealousy breaking out in the ranks, you can ask that individual to model the point you are trying to make.

Caveat: *Never ever demonstrate what you don't want.* It has been shown that the subconscious mind does not hear negations. When you tell your altos "Don't sing flat," the message that remains in their subconscious minds is "Sing flat." Definitely not the result you were after. It is enormously difficult to train yourself to use only positive directions and examples, but make the effort.

Another form of modeling is listening to excellent examples. While you may go home and curl up with the Tallis Scholars or the monks of Solesmes, it is unlikely that many of your singers do so. Find a recording of something you are working on or of a model ensemble. Take a few minutes and

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play a section of the piece during rehearsal. Both you and your singers may believe that it would be impossible to imitate a professional performance. The goal, however, is not imitation; it is inspiration. The listening exercise gives your singers something to emulate.

Modeling is not rote learning, because "rote" learning is teaching a work beyond the abilities of the ensemble and is imitation with no transfer of knowledge. Instead, modeling involves giving an example, which your singers can then use intelligently to improve their performance, not only of the specific passage but in other contexts. Your experience with your choir tells you where problems are likely to show up in a new piece. Instead of waiting for disaster to strike, start with those sections and model the challenging bits. Why not develop a warm-up that incorporates them?

If there is a difficult rhythm in a piece, isolate it. Instead of having the singers sing it over and over again, have them clap the rhythm after you have modeled it. Make sure you keep the demonstrated passage short. Repeat this demonstration with playback a couple of times. Ideally your singers will take that experience, remember the rhythm, and apply it to other pieces when it appears there. Again, don't have them repeat their mistakes.

Expand your ways of communicating with your choir beyond verbal directions and traditional conducting gestures. If there is a blackboard or a whiteboard in your rehearsal room, you can draw the shape of a particular line. Use a tone of voice that you would like the piece to reflect, smooth and gentle for a soft legato vs. strong and energetic for an anthem such as *Zadok the Priest*. Describe the interpretation you seek with hyperbole and metaphor. Help the singers make a connection to the music that is more than parsing black dots on a page. You may think that some of these strategies are better suited to a children's choir. However, we should remember that adults have many ways of assimilating information. Our goal, as directors, is to reach each singer in a way that enables that individual to make his or her best contribution to the group.

One of the benefits of using modeling as a teaching strategy can be to move your singers from an essentially "passive" attitude during rehearsals to a more collaborative model of choral singing. Do your singers come to rehearsal and expect you to pour the music into their heads? Do you oblige them by pounding out the notes on the piano, issuing directions, and hoping for the best? While I am deliberately exaggerating the situation, I hope that you will adopt a way of working with your choir that challenges them to be more than "receptacles." Engaging your singers visually, aurally, or physically will help them become active players in the development of the ensemble.

Don't forget the modeling that lies outside the music. How do you demonstrate your own expectations and attitude toward the rehearsal process? Are you on time? Are you prepared? Is your music in order or are papers flying through the air as you try to find this week's responsorial psalm? Are you happy to see your singers or are you just going through the motions? How is your posture? If you want your singers to sit up straight, stand up straight yourself. What about your breathing? Obviously you have a great deal more to keep track of than the individual singers in the choir. At the same time, they will imitate you, so you need to keep an eye on yourself.

Only you can know what will work best with your individual singers. Many ensembles work effectively with traditional talk and conducting ninety percent of the time. However, imaginative modeling may help you and the choir work more collaboratively. There are no guarantees that your choir will suddenly become vital and engaged. There will be rehearsals where you are facing the proverbial "bumps on a log"—immune to all your creative teaching. Keep smiling; remember that you love them, and that there's always next week.

A Plan for Mutual Enrichment

by Fr. Christopher Smith

One of the things I think is wrong with the liturgy wars is that most people seem to start the discussion from their answer to the question: *What do I think the liturgy should look like?* Yet, the liturgy is not about us, it's about God. And the Popular-Mechanics approach to liturgy which has made everyone an expert in rites means that anyone who has ever come into contact with the Mass has an opinion. So generally I avoid like the plague pontificating on how I think the liturgy should be celebrated and try to actually live the liturgy instead.

Yet the Vicar of Christ, Pope Benedict XVI, has called for the mutual enrichment of the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the Roman Rite and has also suggested that the time has come for a reform of the reform of the rites after the Second Vatican Council. He has also reiterated that there should be mutual respect of both forms and no "ritual mixing." And so many voices are out there calling for a reform of the modern Roman Rite, it's hard to know what such a reform should look like. There are some who are determined to make sure that the extraordinary form never has any influence on the ordinary form, and, if they had their way, they would obliterate its memory from the face of the earth in the most radical *damnatio memoriae* known to human history. For them there is no question of mutual enrichment; rather, they advance a platform of constant liturgical anarchy. Then there are those for whom mutual enrichment sounds like a plot to infect the venerable classical worship of the church with the theological and spiritual rot that has affected the ephemeral postmodern gathering of the new community sung into being.

As a parish priest who habitually celebrates both forms, I am left scratching my head wondering how the two forms are supposed to enrich each other organically if I can't mix the rites. Pope Benedict XVI has given us a rich teaching on the liturgy as Cardinal Ratzinger, and he has also given the church quite an example of how to celebrate the liturgy. But I am sure I am not alone in desperately wishing for some more practical guidance as to how exactly this is supposed to be done and what I can and cannot do to help bring about the organic restoration of the sacred.

Pope Benedict XVI has called for the mutual enrichment of the ordinary and extraordinary forms.

In the final analysis, I wait for the church's instructions on how to go about this. But I do wonder if there could not be three possible stages to the mutual enrichment and reform of the reform, and so I outline here what these might look like. I offer no timeline to this little fantasy. But here it is.

First Stage: Mutual Enrichment

In this first stage, there are many things that can be done now with no mixing of or change to the ordinary and extraordinary forms of the Roman Rite as currently found in the liturgical books.

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I also envision some guidance from the magisterium to point this mutual enrichment in the right direction so as to avoid arbitrariness and to support those priests who respond to the call to mutual enrichment.

Enrichment of the Ordinary Form by the Extraordinary Form

—Bishops in cathedrals and pastors in their churches organically adopting the *ad orientem* position at Mass as implicit in the ordinary form after sustained catechesis of the faithful,

—Reconstruction of altar rails in churches and the spontaneous use of the communion rail as a place from which to distribute Holy Communion,

—Catechesis from the pulpit about the church's preference for Holy Communion on the tongue and under one species,

—Move towards singing the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin at ordinary-form Masses,

—Priests, on their own, choosing the options of the ordinary form which are analogous to the extraordinary form, and leaving aside those which are not,

—The spontaneous and consistent use by the clergy of the maniple, biretta, and amice,

—Singing the propers according to the *Graduale Romanum* at sung Masses, and

—Enforcement of the ecclesiastical discipline on extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

Enrichment of the Extraordinary Form by the Ordinary Form

—Celebration of at least one extraordinary-form Mass as part of the ordinary Sunday Mass schedule by clergy trained to do it in their parishes,

—Use of the readings in the vernacular at low Masses,

—Recitation of the parts pertinent to the faithful, and

—Use of new prefaces and new saints' Masses in the extraordinary form.

Magisterial Involvement

—Document by the Congregations for Divine Worship and Doctrine of the Faith clarifying the church's teaching and discipline on the reception of Holy Communion, indicating the preference for the church's traditional mode of reception. In the same document, a clarification of the right of the priest to celebrate Mass *ad orientem*.

Second Stage: Reform of the Reform

In this second stage, the magisterium would change the existing relevant liturgical and canonical legislation as well as provide new editions of the missals for both forms of the Roman Rite.

Papal Encyclical and Disciplinary Norms

The reform of the reform would be ushered into being by a papal encyclical, the *Mediator Dei* of our time. This encyclical would present a rich theology of the liturgy, a frank and honest reappraisal of post-Vatican-II liturgical praxis, and a liturgical, historical, theological, and canonical explanation of the following: the two forms of the Roman Rite and their mutual enrichment, the *ad orientem* position of celebration at the altar, the traditional mode for the reception of Holy Communion, and the

use of Latin and sacred music. This encyclical would strongly encourage in an optional but clear way all of the points of the reform of the reform. This would be followed, after consultation with the entire hierarchy in a special synod on the reform of the reform, by disciplinary norms which would indicate the normative status of each of the points of the reform of the reform.

Restoration of the Subdiaconate and the Revisiting of Pontificalis Domus

The disciplinary norms would include the restoration of the ancient subdiaconate to the life of the church put in abeyance by Paul VI's *Ministeria Quaedam*. It would also revisit the simplifications in Paul VI's *Pontificalis Domus* concerning the costume of prelates to allow greater freedom for hierarchical dress.

Norms on Church Construction

Issuance by the Congregation for Divine Worship of practical guidelines for the building of new churches and the fabrication of new linens, vestments, and vessels with accompanying theological and spiritual commentary (modelled on St. Robert Bellarmine's works on church construction).

A New Edition of the Ordinary-Form Missal Following the Encyclical

—Dropping options which are rarely used, streamlining remaining options,

—All editions of the missal would be in Latin and vernacular,

—All editions of the lectionary would be bilingual,

—Addition of a new *Ritus Servandus* with more detailed rubrics for the ceremonies,

—Addition of the prayers at the foot of the altar, offertory prayers, and last gospel as options in the ordinary form,

—Restoration of the genuflection at the Creed and before the elevations in the ordinary form,

—Restoration of some feasts from the extraordinary form,

—Integration of orations from the extraordinary form as options,

—Issuance of a *Caeremoniale Presbyterorum* from the papal household in a companion volume to the missal,

—Integration of the offertories from the extraordinary form,

—Making the prayer of the faithful optional,

—Substantial restoration of the extraordinary form kalendar to the ordinary form, and

—Integration of the extraordinary form lectionary as an optional cycle of the ordinary form.

A New Edition of the Extraordinary-Form Missal after the Encyclical

—All editions would include the readings, antiphons, and orations in the vernacular as an option,

—Permission for Holy Communion by intinction,

—Option for the pre-1955 Holy Week rites,

—Addition of ordinary form saints' feasts not present in the extraordinary-form missal for optional use,

—Addition of some ordinary-form prefaces,

—Option to omit the prayers at the foot of the altar and the Last Gospel,

—Composition of vernacular graduals for optional use,

—Option for the use of the ordinary-form lectionary at low Masses,

—Option for the distribution of Holy Communion by ordained subdeacons.

Third Stage: Missal of Benedict XVI, Pope of the Sacred Liturgy

This third stage would take place after the reform of the reform has been in place for some time and the Roman Curia, together with the world episcopate, can look into the feasibility of a once again united form of the Roman liturgy. With some distance from the post-Vatican-II reforms and the lived experience of the reform of the reform, the magisterium of the church could ostensibly distill the organic development of the liturgy from its restoration and renewal into one Roman Rite again.

Is This a Feasible Game Plan?

Let it be said from the beginning, that I am perfectly fine with celebrating the missal of St. Pius V *in toto* and the Missal of Paul VI as the occasion warrants. I do recognize, however, that flexibility in rubrics, calendars and rites, Communion under both species, and the vernacular are among those things that Vatican II called for. Could they be allowed in the extraordinary form in an optional way so as to open the riches of that form to more people? Also, the ordinary form could easily be influenced by many of the prayers and ceremonies of the extraordinary form if that influence is guided well by the magisterium. But if priests attempt any of this on their own, they risk making the liturgy into an eccentric celebration of their opinion on how they think Mass should be celebrated. Because so much of the post-Vatican-II reform was imposed inorganically by arbitrary decisions of clergy and by officialdom, the *mutual enrichment and reform of the reform* also has to happen by the leadership of the clergy united with the Holy Father and the Roman Curia in collaboration with the world episcopate. Then, the organic process of liturgical development can begin again, and the future will be less charged with individuals making their own opinions into the standard of liturgical celebration.

How can I support the communion of the church to restore the sacred and celebrate the Christian Mystery in spirit and in truth?

I would love feedback on this scheme. I am not wedded to it. In fact, I am not totally sure that many of the ideas I propose here are prudent, workable, or even desirable. But the discussion is beginning. This time, however, may we start, not with *What do I think the liturgy should look like?* but with *How can I support the communion of the church to restore the sacred and celebrate the Christian Mystery in spirit and in truth?*

The Birth of the Simple English Propers Project

by Jeffrey Tucker

This article tells the back story of the Simple English Propers Project of Adam Bartlett—the project that will produce a complete set of propers in English for use in every parish. This is a case study in how a huge variety of influences feed into the emergence of new things in the world of art and liturgy, how a symbiosis of people and events can elicit the emergence of an answer to a need that no one entirely knew existed until it became apparent through a circuitous route.

My excitement about this project is no secret. I think it could result in providing that missing link in current resources for Catholic liturgy: musical settings of the liturgical text that choirs can sing every week. It can become a collection that can truly transform the sound and feel of Catholic liturgy in this country, both in the near term and in the long term.

Bartlett has a praise-music background, playing upbeat popular music in parishes only a few years ago. About the time that the CMAA started putting chant editions online, Bartlett found himself drawn to the chant tradition: its solemnity, integrity, and authenticity. He sought out the mentorship of Fr. Columba Kelly, a chant expert who struggled mightily in the 1960s to provide English settings of chant for use in the postconciliar period. Fr. Kelly's work never went mainstream due to many circumstances of time and place (the champions of English found his work too stodgy and the partisans of chant regarded it as too progressive). But he never dropped his enthusiasm for the idea, and this has been passed to Bartlett through careful teaching and instruction.

This is a case study in how a huge variety of influences feed into the emergence of new things in the world of art and liturgy.

Bartlett opened SacredMusicProject.org to make Fr. Kelly's settings available and provide a forum for development of several projects to promote the chant in a variety of forms. Just a year ago, the two of us argued incessantly and sometimes very hotly in private emails about methodology in chant, its rhythmic structure, its production, and much more I won't go into here, but those who know about the old "words vs. music" controversies will be able to imagine the details. At some point this past summer, we both came to a mutual realization: what we were arguing about didn't matter nearly as much as the larger goal of reestablishing the Gregorian ideal.

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We set the arguing aside, and in August 2010, we started brainstorming about what kinds of editions of English chant could actually work in a regular parish as a means of transitioning musicians and parishes out of one paradigm into another that is much closer to the ideal.

Later that very month, I attended the Atlanta Archdiocesan Liturgical Music program. My first session went perfectly. It was attended by people who had a preexisting affection for chant, who had CDs at home, who might know a passing Gregorian melody, who had a sense that something was wrong and uninspiring about the mainstream model, and who were ready for answers. It was an extremely receptive crowd.

I explained my understanding of the musical structure of the Roman Rite (people's parts, schola parts, celebrant's parts; propers, ordinary chants, and dialogues). I gave a sweeping history of church music to explain how we found ourselves in the current predicament. I spoke of ways to get from here to there, and otherwise inspired optimism about the future. I then passed out the *Parish Book of Chant*, a book designed to use traditional Mass ordinaries and Latin hymns to revive interest in the fullness of the Gregorian repertoire.

We set the arguing aside and we started brainstorming.

We sang and sang and it was wonderful. There was a question and answer session that was full of energy and excitement. It was like magic. My presentation ended ninety minutes later, and I received a standing ovation.

My second presentation began, and I began with more confidence than ever, giving the same presentation with more flourish. I continued on and on with the history, the structure of the ritual, the nature of liturgical chant, and more. As I began to sing with them, I was rather taken aback to discover that hardly anyone was singing with me. They were staring at their books with their mouths open with frozen faces of confusion. I pushed ahead, turning to this chant and that chant and continued to try to get them to join me. But it was to no avail. They weren't against what I was asking them to do; they just didn't even know where to begin. The longer this went on, the more people grew restless.

Finally, a few people piped up and started asking questions. Is this something we have to learn for the new Missal? How can I possibly learn a language that I haven't studied? How can I read these notes? I've never had any training in music, so how can I read this stuff? And so on. The questions grew more and more pointed. I tried to answer them, but for nearly an hour, the pent-up frustration was coming out and there was essentially nothing I could do to put these worms back in the can.

I kept wondering: what happened to the old magic? Why is this going so wrong when the first session went so right? These were musicians of a special type. Many if not most are unpaid. They have no advanced training. They found themselves in a local parish that was in need so they stepped up to do the right thing. Most have no instruction or training in Catholic liturgy. In some ways, they are hanging on by a thread, glad to serve, curious about how to do it better, but annoyed by extreme demands without a viable answer to the question of what they are supposed to do this coming week. They are not internet surfers. They do not read chantcafe.com. They do not take off time to attend

week-long training sessions. They have full-time jobs and families and much more to deal with. They came to this one-day session on a Saturday on the recommendation of their pastors.

Finally someone asked me the question that stopped me dead in my tracks. Someone raised his hand and said: "I'm beginning to understand your point about Mass propers but my choir is not ready for Latin and the pastor doesn't want that anyway."

I said, "Oh that's not a problem. Just sing them in English for now."

"What book should I use?"

I stood there facing an increasingly hostile audience that was looking for practical answers with accessible music, and now I faced the most obvious question ever. I stood there a few seconds that seemed like hours and went through a list of resources in my mind.

There are probably eight editions of English propers available, most of them becoming available within the last eighteen months. Of the two in print, one uses the old calendar and King James English and the other sets only seasonal antiphons. The rest are online. One requires musical expertise. One is missing the offertory chants. Most are set to the old calendar so that requires some fancy manipulation to make them work. Two require competent choral singers. One set is designed for seminaries and not parishes. Only one has pointed Psalms following the antiphon so they are mostly too short to fill the time of the ritual action.

What was I going to do, stand there and rattle off a bunch of domain names and ask people to use calendar conversion charts, recruit new singers, and learn Psalm pointing techniques?

The distance between the current practice and the ideal is vast and the differences touch on every conceivable aspect of music itself.

It was at that point that it struck me. I'm standing here up without a good answer to the most basic question. I had no in-print structural model that I could give these people for the parts of the Mass to be sung by the schola. I never felt that before, standing before an audience, just completely stripped bare and vulnerable, unable to provide a compelling answer to this most basic question.

The session eventually came to an end, and mercifully so. A few people came up to me after to either reassure me or further make the point that what I'm proposing is beyond hopeless.

I had the rest of the conference to reflect. Where do we stand all these decades after the liturgy reforms? The majority of parishes are stuck in a rut of endless repetition of music that has no fundamental connection to the ritual except in the most tangential sense. Those who understand the problem have worked extremely hard to draw attention to the Gregorian ideal and show it this music is integral to the ritual. But the distance between the current practice and the ideal is vast and the differences touch on every conceivable aspect of music itself: rhythm, notation, style, language, purpose, orientation.

Reflecting on this in the days following, the Simple English Propers project was born. So far as I'm concerned, the Responsorial Psalms are taken care of with chabanelpsalms.org. The missing pieces are clear: entrance, offertory, and communion chants with pointed Psalms in English. I approached Bartlett, with whom I had shared this story, and the project started falling in place. His

training had prepared him for this, and his software skills at setting the chant also made the project possible.

We talked about the need to provide both variety (no repeating psalm tones every week) and also predictability (so that the music did not devour rehearsal time). The answer was to preserve the Gregorian modes from the originals in the *Graduale Romanum* while maintaining a formula within the modes. We had many email exchanges about language issues. He and others educated me about the limitations of the traditional office tones and *Gloria Patri* tones for use in English and hence the need for a different tone structure.

Once the model was in place, he went to work. He laid out a formula for the introit, offertory, and communion, one for each Gregorian mode, a total of twenty-four formulas. He adapted a variation of Fr. Samuel Weber's own spin on the Meinrad tones to make it possible to sing the Psalms effortlessly in English. We worked through translation issues, choosing a modernized version of the most traditional English translation for Catholics, and recruited an army of volunteers to start typing in the texts.

It was only a matter of weeks before the entire structure was in place, and the posting of editions began in earnest on the first week of Advent and have continued. Many parishes use them and everyone has posted and reported phenomenal success with them. Jeffrey Ostrowski sends notes every few days about how beautiful and well crafted he finds them to be. David Haas has said that he is very impressed by them as well.

I'm quite convinced that finally we will have a single book that we can hand to parish musicians.

To make sure this was not a temporary matter, the Chantcafe.com, a project of the CMAA, raised five thousand dollars in a mere ten days to underwrite the effort, thanks to many excited donors. The plan is to produce a book that will be some three hundred fifty pages and will include all that is necessary for any parish schola to sing its own contribution to the Mass from beginning to end every Sunday and every solemnity.

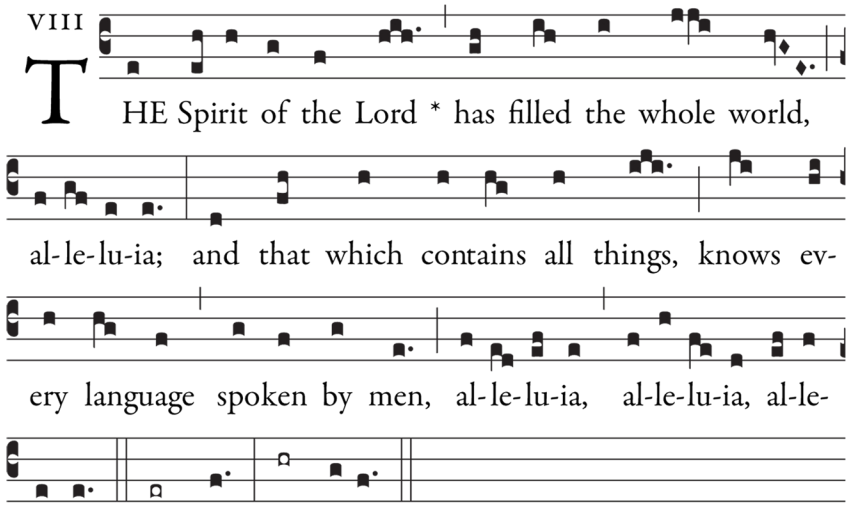
This is how a forty-year gap is being filled in Catholic liturgy, through the influence of a remarkably diverse group of people: Adam Bartlett, Arlene Oost-Zinner, David Haas, Scott Turkington, Frs. Columba Kelly and Samuel Weber, William Mahrt (who educated me about the propers of the Mass), Jeffrey Ostrowski (who pioneered online resources), and so many others, especially those who gave money for the effort. It has been a remarkable journey, and we are only one third the way there.

I have very high expectations and I'm quite convinced that finally, forty years after the promulgation of the ordinary form, we will have a single book that we can hand to parish musicians and say: this is what you need to sing the propers of the Mass, on the way toward fulfilling the ideals of sacred music, the wishes of the Second Vatican Council, and the pastoral needs of the people for beautiful, prayerful music.

PENTECOST – MASS OF THE DAY

INTROIT

Spiritus Domini *Wis I: 7*



Psalm 68 (67)

1. Let God arise; let his foes be **scat**tered. *
   Let those who hate him flee from *his* **pres**ence.

   As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; †
   like wax that melts before the **fire**, *
   so the wicked shall perish at the presence *of* **God**.

2. But the just shall rejoice at the presence of **God**; *
   they shall exult with glad *re***joic**ing.

   O sing to God; make music to his name. †
   Extol the One who rides on the **clouds**. *
   The LORD is his name; exult at *his* **pres**ence.