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EDITORIAL

Focus

By William Mahrt

Symmetry is essential to the various elements of the liturgy, whether architecture, the arts of motion, or even music. Participation in the liturgy requires attention, even recollection, focus. Symmetry aids in focus; this is because it creates a focal point at its center, which draws the attention; this focus, in turn, aids in our disposition toward the mysteries being celebrated and our participation in them.

The most evident aspect of symmetry and focus is to be seen in the architecture. The traditional cruciform arrangement of a church is a nave and sanctuary as longitudinal elements and transepts as lateral ones. The nave and sanctuary create a focal point, which is at the "East" end of the longitudinal space and which ultimately focuses upon the altar. Or does it? Especially in those churches with splendid stained glass surrounding the sanctuary at considerable height, the attention, which is drawn eastward toward the altar, is also lifted up and directed to a transcendent dimension, upwards and beyond the church to the heavens. The orientation of this longitudinal space upon the heavens eastward creates an additional focus: it faces the place of the rising sun—a symbol of Christ—where he reigns, and whence he will return.

The transepts of the cruciform arrangement create a lateral symmetry that focuses upon the crossing, the point where the lateral and longitudinal spaces intersect. In recent times, the altar in some great cathedrals has been moved to this point; this creates a central focus upon the altar itself, though it diminishes somewhat the eastward focus. Great cathedrals, especially in England and Spain, have impressive, light-flooded towers or domes at the crossing, which increase the focus upon this point, and add a transcendent element to it as well.

Symmetry is essential to the various elements of the liturgy.

The cruciform has a deeper significance—it symbolizes the body of Christ on the cross, and this in turn emphasizes his presence at the center of the Mass which is celebrated there—the Mass is his action, and his centrality to that action is made more vivid by the cruciform.

The altar also shows significant symmetries. If there is a tabernacle on the high altar, all things around it contribute to a focus upon it; candles, flowers, statues, etc., are usually placed in symmetrical arrangement, so that the tabernacle is the object of considerable focus. When the tabernacle is placed to the side, the symmetry is broken, and the centrality of the sacrament is obscured. One

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sometimes even sees an arrangement of the altar that is non-symmetrical—e.g., the candles are all on one side of the altar and the flowers on the other, creating a casual effect, as if it were an arrangement for an informal dinner, rather than the Lamb's High Banquet. Worse, the disposition of the elements in the sanctuary is sometimes such that the altar is off center (to the right as the congregation faces the altar), and the ambo has been set in a kind of balance against the altar, based upon a theory that the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist are equal, and so the altar should not be at the center, but offset. This is, admittedly, also a kind of symmetry, but it is a false one, since the Eucharist is an even more fundamental presence than the Gospel.

There are two ways in which motion can create focus, by moving to a goal and by encircling an important object.

There is in the traditional ordering of a church, a side of priority, the side to the right of the celebrant as he faces the congregation, called the gospel side, because the ambo or the pulpit, at which the gospel is read, is on this side. This is balanced by an ambo on the opposite side, where the epistle is read, but this ambo is usually smaller, emphasizing the subordinate relation of the epistle to the gospel. This symmetry might be called a dynamic symmetry, one in which the symmetrical elements are not quite equal, but complement each other for a particular purpose.

The rubrics for the ordinary form speak of only one ambo, from which all the lessons are read, but its earliest rubrics say "ambo (or ambones)," leaving open the possibility of using two. Commentators say that the reason for only one ambo is that this expresses the unity of the scriptures, but I am unable to find such a justification in any official document. I suspect that the reason all the lessons are delivered from the same ambo is to leave the ambo on the opposite side free for a cantor to preside from that side—one ambo reserved for the scripture, the other open to other uses. But when there is no cantor, it would seem that the epistle side could be used for the first two lessons, and then the gospel side for the gospel and homily. The gospel is privileged by being the ultimate lesson in the liturgy of the word in an ascending order and by a procession to the ambo, accompanied by candles and incense. As one of the celebrants of our Mass in Palo Alto said, it makes little sense for a procession to go to a place where you have just been. This is a purposeful dynamic symmetry: there is a balance between the first lessons and the gospel expressed by their being read in symmetrical positions, at opposite sides of the sanctuary, but there is also a priority expressed for the gospel through the elements of the procession, through a greater prominence of the ambo from which it is read, as well as through the convention that the gospel side is the side of priority.

The significant elements of the liturgy are not only spatial, but also temporal, and the interaction between these elements is mediated by motion, principally in processions. There are two ways in which motion can create focus, by moving to a goal and by encircling an important object (called by liturgical theorists "circumambulation"). The gospel procession moves to the ambo or pulpit as a goal, and this is experienced as a kind of progress, especially when the goal has a spatial priority,

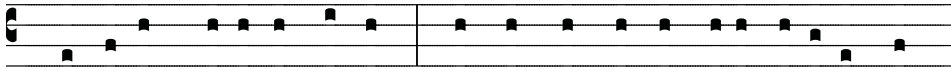
as does the ambo on the gospel side. The incensing of the altar is an example of motion that encircles a sacred object. There is symmetry in the patterns by which the thurible is swung, and the rhythm of this motion is articulated by the sound of the chains of the thurible clanking against it. In the Eastern Church, this rhythmic motion is made more evident by the use of small bells attached to the thurible, which jingle with each swing. These days, celebrants who use incense are sometimes self-conscious about it and avoid the clanking of the chains, but this is a mistake; this clanking is a significant element of the rhythm of the purposeful motion. Even though music is being sung during the incensation, as is usually the case, the human ear knows perfectly well how to distinguish rhythmic sounds from two different sources at once, and so this sound of the thurible does no damage whatever to the music.

Many processions include elements of both circumambulation and moving to a goal. A good example is the entrance procession at Mass. While the traditional entrance procession was often merely a discreet movement from the sacristy to the altar, sometimes the procession would move through the church. These days, a more elaborate procession is often made; the members of the procession make their way to the back of the church and then form a procession down the center aisle to the altar. But unless the sacristy is in the back of the church, this procession has a problem: its point of departure at the back is somewhat artificial and its preparation by having the clergy walk to the back in a non-processional way is awkward, to say the least. Sometimes the procession goes outside and around to the front of the church, in the front door and down the center aisle, unless, of course, it is raining. More significantly the procession can begin at the sacristy at the front, moving down the side aisle, across the back of the church and then up the center aisle to the altar. This has the advantage that it represents the actual movement from sacristy to altar, but it has a greater significance, since it is essentially a circumambulation. By moving down the side aisle and up the center aisle, it encircles half of the congregation, symbolically subsuming the whole congregation in its purposeful motion to its goal, the altar. It thus symbolically incorporates the congregation into the motion and presents them to the altar, the most sacred place in the church, whose sacrality is then observed by the incensation. The circumambulation creates a focus upon the congregation, which is then turned to its ultimate goal, the altar.

The paradigm of liturgical music is Gregorian chant, and it has its own kinds of symmetry.

The motions of acolytes, when symmetrical, can project a clear focal point. Although there is no developed art of dance in the liturgy, these motions have some similarities to dance. The motions of a solo dancer can seem intricate and beautiful but perhaps easily achieved in the freedom of the soloist. But when two dancers replicate exactly the same motions, then an extraordinary sense of focus and control is projected that is awesome to observe. The motions of acolytes, even though not the result of such skill, achieve a similar sense of focus and purpose. When they move to the center and back out in perfect mirror motion, the focal point of the center is clear, and their motion conveys the purposefulness of that center, even beyond the function of the particular motions.

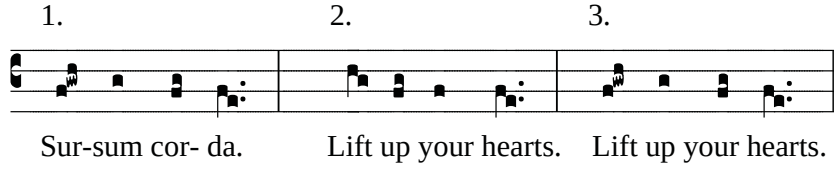
Music, also, has symmetries which create focus. The paradigm of liturgical music is Gregorian chant, and it has its own kinds of symmetry. Its texts are principally the psalms, and their symmetries are well known: The typical psalm verse consists of two complete, complementary statements, the so-called *parallelismus membrorum*:



For behold God is my helper; and the Lord is the protector of my soul.

Moreover, the melody gives this symmetry a particular focal point. The first half rises to a peak, and, in the convention of the performance of the psalm tone, makes a brief pause before it descends to its final cadence. That brief pause is measured and lasts for just a second or two, but as the center of the symmetry, at the high point of the melody, it forms a momentary point of contemplation, transcending the symmetry for an instant. More elaborate Gregorian melodies have similar shapes, so that Peter Wagner theorized that the archetypal shape of Gregorian melody was the arch, rising from a low point to a peak, symbolizing the ascent of prayer, and then descending, symbolizing an answer to the prayer. Phrase after phrase of Gregorian chant has such motion, and the effect of the singing of such phrases in succession is the lifting of the attention heavenward.

But not all chanted melodies have such a shape; recently proposed psalm tones, and the current melodies for the English liturgy themselves, sometimes seem upsidedown, consisting of a prevalence of descending motion. An example is "Sursum corda" and its translation:



In the Latin, "Sursum" (literally, up) receives an ascending three-note group with a quilisma in the middle reinforcing the upward motion (Ex. 1). The current English takes away the first two notes and sets the text to the rest, which are in a prevalently downward direction (Ex. 2).[1] The English could have easily been set literally to the same melody as the Latin (Ex. 3), thus preserving the ascending direction so intimately linked with the meaning of the text. Fortunately, this will be remedied in the new translation. A similar demonstration could be made with the Latin and English melodies for the Lord's Prayer. Unfortunately, the present "upside-down" melody for the Lord's prayer may be retained in American usage.

[1] One is reminded of Isaiah 5:20, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" Is this not calling up down and down up?

There are many fascinating symmetries in polyphonic music; I will mention only one, perhaps the prevalent one: imitation. In imitation, each voice takes the same melody in turn, and thus the accumulation of different voices presenting the same melody makes up a harmonious whole. The symmetry of these voices adding up to a harmonious whole evokes a sense of purposeful order that in turn represents the sense of cosmic order with which the Creator endowed the universe. This is a different kind of focus, but one which engages the affections: the perception of the harmony of such order touches the heart and attracts the will to the paradigm of harmonious order. Pope Benedict has referred to this effect of music:

> The Church . . . must arouse the voice of the cosmos and, by glorifying the Creator, elicit the glory of the cosmos itself, making it also glorious, beautiful, habitable and beloved.[2]

I have described several ways in which the elements of liturgy create a focus; music, however, is the key to this focus. The elements of architecture are the object of processions, motion to a focal point; processions create their own focal points. But all of these motions are enhanced and given a strong sense of order by music. Music has the capacity to construct time, thus to provide a focused context for motion. Processions would be amorphous without music; with it, they are orderly and purposeful. Moreover, the focus that sacred music, particularly Gregorian chant, gives to motion is that the rhythm of both chant and polyphony is a free rhythm, one that by its avoidance of strong beats evokes the transcendence of the regular passage of time, evokes an intimation of eternity. In this it serves a function similar to the great Gothic sanctuaries in which the elevated circle of windows draws the attention upward and outward, evoking its transcendent purpose.

[2] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, tr. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 124.

ARTICLES

The Agony and the Ecstasy: The Fundamental Importance of Liturgical Chant in the Roman Missal and Our Celebration of the Eucharistic Mystery

by Msgr. Andrew Wadsworth

A plenary lecture to the Church Music Association of America, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, June 14, 2011

You will be familiar, no doubt, with the old adage that the eye is the gateway to the soul. I have always found this a particularly persuasive idea, for it recognizes the fundamental fact that there is something deep within each of us that responds to beauty. Whether it is wonder at creation or a response to art which captivates us, there can be very few of us who are not susceptible to perfection of form and the many things which delight us visually.

Less popular is the idea that the eye is the gateway to hell. Immediately we tend to feel a resistance to this notion, not only because it is seemingly such a negation of the former principle, but perhaps also because it so easily suggests that appearances can in some senses be deceptive and that what we see may not be the whole story. As troubling as this concept may be, it does however, acknowledge the complex and omnipresent reality that most of us are very easily beguiled by what we see.

When we transpose these ideas into the arena of liturgy, the philosophical dilemma is noticeably exacerbated, for the liturgy is not solely visual, but rather engages all the senses, and in the same way it is not only corporeal but it also has an irreducible spiritual element. The liturgy therefore heightens in us an awareness of the intrinsic relationship between beauty and truth, just as it is, of its nature, constituted of these elements and should clearly become a vehicle for them when we celebrate it.

The liturgy heightens an awareness of the intrinsic relationship between beauty and truth.

Central to the Christian revelation is the teaching that "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). In that sense, it is not only the eye which is the gate-

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way to heaven, but in a very real way, the ear too. As musicians, we need no convincing of this tenet, for it expresses our deep-seated conviction that what we hear cannot only engender faith, but over a life time, can nourish and bring it to maturity.

Nowhere is this more evident than in our liturgical chant, which enables the word of truth to be expressed in the beauty of song in a way which is not adequately described by the comparatively sterile designation of the individual elements of words and music. In our Catholic tradition, liturgical chant is first and foremost cantillation, a song which arises from the text, a song which is essentially a heightened proclamation of a verbal message and which takes its emphases from the natural accentuation of the text and finds its melodic rhythm from the cadence which is already within the words.

As it often sings of the glory of God, the wonder of creation, the richness of salvation in Christ, the mystery of the church, and our continual need of God's mercy and grace, it is often an ecstatic song which has rather more in common with the song of lovers than it does with the song of colleagues; it should have the familiarity of the song of those who are clearly of the same family, or those who are united as fellow citizens of the same territory. It is likewise never a song of violence, protest, or dissent and it is overwhelmingly a song which is more about God than it is about us.

Liturgical song is only consistently experienced by a relatively small percentage of Latin Rite Catholics.

So far, I have outlined what I believe to be the characteristics of the liturgical song of the Catholic Church. It is, I would hold, not merely a subjective formulation on my part, but an accurate description of the character and function of liturgical song as inherited by the church from the People of Israel, in an unbroken tradition and set before the church by the magisterium in every age up to and including our own. The challenge I wish to make is to ask if this is how you and most members of the Latin Rite experience liturgical song, and if not, why not?

If I were asking for individual responses to that question—which I'm not, I would imagine rather than an immediate plethora of answers, that there would be something of a thoughtful silence. For isn't it true to say that while we all recognize the elephant in the room, nobody particularly wants to be the first to address it? Given who we are and why we are here and overcoming my natural British sense of discretion, I would like to make a tentative start in answering what is a rather thorny question.

I would suggest that at the present time, liturgical song, as I have described it, is only consistently experienced by a relatively small percentage of Latin Rite Catholics, even if it is also true that there are some individuals and communities who do experience it in this way on a regular or even continuous basis.

The first reason why this is the case, is that many of our people remain essentially reticent when it comes to singing at Mass. A number of years ago, there was an insightful study by an American academic, Thomas Day, entitled *Why Catholics Can't Sing*. I would imagine that most of you will have read it as it has rapidly become established as something of a classic in this field. Day, a music lecturer at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island, accurately and scathingly takes a very considerable side swipe at the "Irish-American" repertoire of songs that currently comprise Catholic liturgical music, not only in the U.S.A. but also for the most part wherever Mass is celebrated in English.

He goes on to identify a "liturgical post-modernism" which he suggests has resulted in noisy and forced participation from the laity, and encourages a kind of church-wide narcissism that can represent a serious threat both to individuals and the institution of the church. Lest you should think that he is exclusively a prophet of doom, Day also makes some very positive suggestions for nurturing the latent vitality he perceives in the Catholic community, talent which as those most intimately engaged with the liturgy at parish level, you will all readily acknowledge. If you have read Thomas Day's book, you may well agree that it is an informative and often entertaining critique of a situation we recognize all too well.

Although Day was writing over twenty years ago, many of his observations are still valid for the present time, just as much of his advice has gone unheeded in a liturgical culture which is too easily driven by the exigencies of publishers who for the most part are the architects of our liturgical repertoire, influencing choices of the liturgical music of which they are so often the sole purveyors. Let me be clear at this point, while I would want to register my appreciation for those publishers who are at the service of the church's liturgy, I would also wish to identify a serious lacuna in our direction of a liturgical culture which has latterly been shaped by a repertoire of liturgical music principally determined by publishers.

Advocates of chant have an annoying tendency to rewrite history in relation to what was common praxis in our parishes until the late sixties.

At this point it is important to make a few historical observations which shed further light on this undesirable scenario. It would be a mistake to characterize this dilemma purely in terms of what has happened since Vatican II. Advocates of chant in particular have an annoying tendency to rewrite history in relation to what was common praxis in our parishes until the late sixties, thereby contextualizing the debate in an unreliable "nostalgia" for something which was never the case.

For English-speaking Catholics, I think it is fair to say that a pre-dominantly "Low-Mass" culture in which music is essentially an addition to the liturgy rather than intrinsic to it, was already a centuries-old tradition at the time of Vatican II. In this respect, the current enthusiasm for chant, and a growing competence in its performance, particularly in celebrations of the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite, is not so much the recovery of a recently lost tradition, but rather the realization of the authentic principles of the liturgical movement as canonized by Pope St. Pius X in his motu proprio of 1903, *Tra le sollecitudini*, underlining the centrality of Gregorian chant, guidelines which were largely unimplemented both at the time of the council and in its wake.

Some sixty years later, the pastoral liturgical movement, as it had become, had largely abandoned the principles which motivated Dom Guéranger and the renewal he initiated, in favor of influences which are more broadly ecumenical and introduced into the Roman Liturgy elements which are more commonly found outside the Catholic Church. Nowhere was this influence more keenly felt than in the realm of liturgical music, for the principle that a repertoire of liturgical chant which had been proper to the Mass, at least in its most solemn celebrations, was largely and almost universally set aside in preference for music which might be most accurately described as "non-liturgical" in character, given its frequent lack of dependence on liturgical or biblical texts and its introduction into our liturgical celebrations of a voice which is in many ways alien to the spirit of the liturgy.

It is vital to grasp that this is not only true of much music which is contemporary in style but it is also evident in hymnody which is so often of a devotional rather than liturgical character and which was transplanted into the Mass from non-catholic forms of worship which are constructed on entirely different principles. This is the modern-day inheritance of the "Low-Mass" culture which envisages a largely spoken liturgy punctuated at key moments by congregational singing.

For many Catholics, their core repertory of liturgical music will currently be mostly of this type. It is then supplemented by a range of responsorial music which need not be known as it relies on repetition. The notion of a form of liturgical music which is intrinsically related to the action of the Mass and which is in perfect concord with the nature of the liturgy expressed in a repertory which both links us to the past and yet roots us in the present still remains beyond the experience of most of our parishes and communities.

Furthermore, there has grown up in our communities an expectation that liturgical song will frequently entail the assembly singing about itself. I had a powerful demonstration of this expectation last year in Atlanta while addressing a group of liturgical musicians about the musical implications of the forthcoming English translation of the missal. I had used the opportunity to encourage initiatives among composers and musicians to look at creative ways of responding to the challenge of singing the Proper of the Mass. In the questions following my address, one young musician responsible for the music in his parish said: "I hear what you're saying, but where are the 'we' songs"? He had a point—the texts of the Roman Missal (including the lectionary and the Graduale Romanum) are generally light-weight when it comes to the community celebrating itself!

Liturgical music which is intrinsically related to the action of the Mass still remains beyond the experience of most of our parishes and communities.

If it is true that the past forty years have established something of a hermeneutic of discontinuity with regard to liturgical chant, to the extent that our authentic and most ancient tradition is widely seen as alien and unfamiliar and that musical genres previously unthinkable in a liturgical context are commonly considered acceptable and even desirable, then we have truly lived through the most extraordinary revolution which has impoverished our understanding of the mystery we celebrate to the same extent as it has decimated the number of our people who regularly participate in the celebration of the Mass.

Another example may serve to illustrate how far we have deviated from the path: I have deliberately removed any details which will enable you to identify where this Mass took place. Suffice to say, that it could reasonably have been witnessed in just about any large city in the English-speaking world. The occasion was a youth Mass involving a large number of young people of school and college age. The nature of the occasion meant that it would be reasonable to assume that the majority of those present were what could be described as practicing Catholics, at least in relation to the frequency of their liturgical life.

As the entrance procession began, so did the entrance song. It was sung by a male singer who accompanied himself on the guitar and he was joined by a female singer with a very nice voice. I did not know the song (something I have come to expect) but neither, it would seem, did anyone else and despite the text of the song being reproduced in the participation aid, the only ones singing were

the two singers I have already described. The song was certainly religious in content without being noticeably liturgical or scriptural in its text. Musically it was entirely secular in character but skillfully sung and played in genuinely affecting manner. As this beginning to the liturgy unfolded, it became more and more obvious that this was a performance and we were cast in the role of the audience. This intimation was further confirmed as the song ended and it was greeted with enthusiastic and prolonged applause, curtailed only by the celebrant beginning the Sign of the Cross.

This experience was repeated at several subsequent moments in the Mass and notably during the Liturgy of the Word, at the Preparation of the Gifts and during the distribution of Holy Communion. Each time, the dynamics were those of performance and the liturgical assembly slid perceptibly into another mode but one clearly familiar to these young Catholics, that of the concert. At each subsequent moment, the pattern was repeated and the performance was recognized by applause. Am I the only person who is profoundly ill at ease with this, or can we identify that style, content, and delivery all determine whether our music is truly liturgical or not? Once again, it would be a mistake to identify this difficulty with purely contemporary musical styles: I have witnessed much the same phenomenon with traditional liturgical music in some of our great churches and cathedrals.

All the chants of the Latin original have been adapted to the English text.

In an attempt to balance up, I would like to cite another example, once again shorn of any identifying references, let us assume that it is a Sunday Mass in an average-size parish. The focus of my interest in this second example is also a procession, but this time the communion procession. In this case, there is a cantor who introduces a simple antiphon which the congregation easily takes up. The cantor supplies the psalm verses and the singing of this communion chant continues throughout the distribution of Holy Communion with everyone joining in, regardless of whether they are on the move or not. The result is very powerful and underlines the liturgical action effectively. The cantor directs the congregational singing in an unobtrusive manner and the chant eventually subsides into quiet organ playing and then silence.

The implementation of the English translation of the third typical edition of the Roman Missal later this year will be the biggest single moment of change for Catholics who worship in English in the forty years since the revisions of the liturgy which followed Vatican II. It is a moment of unparalleled significance, not least because it represents a natural opportunity to reassess all that we do when we celebrate the Mass. The new edition of the Missal contains more music than any of its predecessors and includes a complete set of chants for the principal parts of the Order of Mass. All the chants of the Latin original have been adapted to the English text.

You will know that a guiding principle in the preparation of this translation has been the desire to render the fullest content of the original Latin in English which is fit for liturgical use. Greater attention to the scriptural resonances in these texts acknowledges scripture as the largest single source of our liturgy. The elevated register of the language, the euphony of its phrases and the cadence of its orations have all been prepared with the thought that most of these texts are by

nature sung. For that reason, and without wishing to exclude the use of other genres where appropriate, the musical language of the missal is Gregorian Chant.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal echoes both *Sacrasanctum Concilium* and *Musicam Sacrum* in proclaiming that, "All other things being equal, Gregorian chant holds first place because it is proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other types of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful."[1] Attention to this latter quality in response to the implementation of the new translation should in due course bring about a general change in the culture of our liturgical music. If that is the case, then it is long overdue and will be greatly welcomed.

Chant is unique in its service to the spoken word.

In her pioneering work in promoting knowledge, understanding, and expertise in the chant, the founder of the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge, the late Mary Berry, always took the opportunity to state her sincerely held scholarly view that chant was in fact part of the primitive kerygma or deposit communicated to the apostolic church of the first years. She held that the process whereby the church identified certain scriptural texts with the celebration of particular aspects of the Christian mystery included the wedding of those same texts to music. In the case of the Old Testament, this would mean that we share a common musical patrimony with Judaism in a tradition that leads back to the temple and the chant sung by Our Lord himself. She often said that this was most discernible in the liturgy of Holy Week and had even supported this view by making recordings among Jews in the Middle East showing such an origin for our prophecy tone and chants for the lamentations.

Whether Mary Berry was right or whether it was an educated guess, we cannot know, but her instinct certainly expresses a truth about our chant which every generation has to discover for itself —this precious song which has traveled continents and centuries in coming to us, this precious gift which has embedded itself even in the fabric of Western music, is unique in its service to the spoken word which it embellishes without obscuring and explains without exhausting. This song of the saints, ever ancient, and yet ever new; beautiful in its simple sophistication, accessible to all, and yet slow in yielding up its secrets, has its singers and advocates in every generation but is seeking new voices who will take it up in our time and ensure that the song of beauty and truth is heard even in this generation as the song of salvation and an instrument of God's grace.

[1] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶41.

The Hermeneutic of Continuity: the Proper Chants of the Mass as the Liaison between the Two Forms of the Roman Mass

By Edward Schaefer

This paper was first presented in French at the conference *Recontres Grégoriennes* (April 1–3, 2011), which had as its theme "Chant Grégorien, acte liturgique: du cloître à la cite." It was first published in the proceedings of this conference and is reprinted here, in a slightly revised edition, with permission.

Introduction

The promulgation of Pope Benedict XVI's Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* in 2007 brought into the open a debate that had been hiding in the shadows for nearly forty years: that of the relationship between the 1569 Mass of Pius V, the so-called Tridentine or, more frequently, traditional Mass, and the 1969 Mass of Paul VI, the so-called *Novus ordo missae* or, typically, the post-Vatican-II Mass.[1]

Pope John XXIII's desire to let into the church a "gust of fresh air"[2] and his characterization of the Second Vatican Council as "a work of renewal and bringing [the church] up to date"[3] unwittingly launched a spirit in and after the council that believed that updating the church would require changes in its very nature. Monsignor Gherardini eloquently sums up this spirit, describing

> provisions that were made . . . with formulations and positions which were shocking in their innovative force (in some cases even explosive and invasive) and shocking in their audacity which proposed them even as profoundly evangelical ideas, notwithstanding the lack of evidence . . . for their biblical foundation and vital connection with the acquired doctrinal patrimony of the Church.[4]

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[1] The last missal to preserve most of the elements of the traditional Mass was published in 1962. The missal incorporating fully the reforms implemented after the Second Vatican Council was first published in 1970. Thus, this paper will refer normally to the 1962 and the 1970 missals when comparing elements of the traditional and post-Vatican II forms of the Mass.

[2] Brunero Gherardini, *The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion*, tr. Franciscans of the Immaculate (Frigento, Italy: Casa Mariana Editrice, 2009), pp. 37ff.

[3] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 37ff.

[4] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 46.

Not the least among these changes were the changes in the Mass (ordo missae), which was revised in the context of a drive to rid the church of a "tradition" that was interpreted as a craving for power and triumphalism.[5] The revised Mass placed the church on a modernized, generic platform, "ambiguously characterized by the notion of 'gathering,' and steeped in an atmosphere so secular as to despoil the homo Dei of his sacredness. The priest was fashioned as a president, a simple functionary."[6] The Mass was stripped of anything that was deemed as a holdover from an antiquated church that had been characterized by clericalism, juridicalism, and triumphalism.[7]

Amidst this revolution in the church, there were a few who, rather courageously, raised the issue of the necessity, in an apostolic church, that the Mass adhere to the tradition of the church and who, further, dared to ask the question of whether or not the *Novus ordo missae* truly adhered to that tradition. Perhaps the best known of these was Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, whose opposition to many of the changes in the church after the Second Vatican Council led, among other things, to the granting of an "indult" by Pope John Paul II in 1984, by which bishops could authorize the use of the traditional Mass.[8] Ultimately, however, Archbishop Lefebvre's challenges to the sweeping changes in Catholicism resulted in his excommunication in 1988. One could argue about the specific reasons for the archbishop's excommunication. However, it would be hard to argue about the world's interpretation of it: that opposition to the post-Vatican II changes in the church was unacceptable and that such opposition could lead to the most serious of consequences.

The Mass was stripped of anything that was deemed as a holdover from an antiquated church.

Curiously, after Archbishop Lefebvre's excommunication Pope John Paul II did establish several societies in full communion with Rome but still devoted to the traditional Mass and to the traditional, or pre-Vatican-II, ways in which the Catholic Church viewed herself and conducted herself in the world.[9]

However, aside from these not insignificant events, until Pope Benedict's Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* of 2007, the activities of traditionally oriented Catholics and the questions they have raised about contemporary Catholicism have been, for the last four decades, largely swept aside by both the church hierarchy and the vast majority of the declining population of Catholics in the pews. Traditionalists have been either hostilely dismissed as unable to adjust to an "updated" church, or begrudgingly tolerated only because it is assumed they will all eventually die, and the challenges they present will take care of themselves.[10]

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[5] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 51.

[6] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 51–52.

[7] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 52.

[8] See John Paul II, Circular Letter *Quatuor abhinc annos* (3 October 1984). *Adoremus*, accessed November 11, 2010 <http://www.adoremus.org/Quattuorabhincannos.html>.

[9] The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest, and the Personal Apostolic Administration of Saint John Mary Vianney.

[10] Of course, the events described here are not in any way a full chronicle of the various activities promoting or challenging various aspects of the Second Vatican Council. Such a chronicle would be far beyond the scope

The election of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger to the chair of Peter, however, has changed everything. Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, whose affinity for the traditional Mass is well known, has moved to reconcile the church hierarchy with disenfranchised and even excommunicated traditionalists.[11] In his first address to the Roman curia after he had been elected pope, he openly raised questions about why the reforms following the Second Vatican Council had led to dissent in some areas of the church. He offered that "the nature of the Council . . . [has been] basically misunderstood," and even described a "hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture" that needed to be reconciled with a "'hermeneutic of reform,' . . . in the continuity of the one subject-Church which the Lord has given to us."[12]

Pope Benedict XVI has moved to reconcile the church hierarchy with disenfranchised and even excommunicated traditionalists.

Such rhetoric from the Holy Father himself has emboldened those who would dare to raise questions of any sort about the Second Vatican Council. For but one example, Monsignor Brunero Gherardini's previously cited text, *The Ecumenical Vatican Council II: A Much Needed Discussion*, raises compelling questions about Vatican II's process of "updating the church" and whether or not this process crossed a forbidden line and attempted to change things that were a matter of the "immutable essence" of the church:

> Certainly the immutable essence of the Church, her Faith, her dogmas, and her "formally constitutive" elements were not supposed to be tampered with in the slightest; yet, with the presumption of uncovering this immutable essence in its depths—not in order to compromise it, but to bring it up to date—an astonishing number of things, both in word and deed, were deemed open to change in this area.[13]

Monsignor Gherardini, a Canon of St. Peter's Basilica and a widely renowned and respected theologian, also explicates clearly the pastoral, as opposed to dogmatic, nature of the council, and in so doing, opens the door to aspects of the council being changed or even rejected.[14]

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of this paper. The attempt here is simply to offer a very general overview of the situation as a context for the principle focus of this article.

[11] On January 24, 2009, the excommunications of the four bishops consecrated by bishop Levebvre were lifted; see "Document Repealing Excommunications" (Rome: Congregation for Bishops, January 24, 2009), accessed November 14, 2010 < http://www.speroforum.com/a/17845/Excommunication-lifted-from-dissident-Catholics>. Also, in 2009, the Vatican began a series of meetings that continue today with the Society of St. Pius X in an effort to mend the long-standing rift between the Society and the Vatican; see "Vatican Announces Start of Dialogue with Traditionalist Group" (Catholic News Service, October 15, 2009), accessed November 14, 2010 <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/0904605.htm>.

[12] Pope Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Roman Curia Offering Them His Christmas Greetings" (December 22, 2005); accessed on November 14, 2010 <http://benedettoxvi.va/ holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/december/documents/hf_ben_xvi_spe_20051222_roman-curia_ en.html>.

[13] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 47.

[14] Gherardini, *Vatican Council*, 55ff.

The Holy Father's approach to the post-Vatican II reforms and his openness to the traditional Mass has also forced those who would refuse to hear any discussion that might question any aspect of the Second Vatican Council to open their hearts and minds to what is clearly a critical discussion for the church.

For example, a United States organization, the Society for Catholic Liturgy, after considerable deliberation, changed its Statement of Principles in 2005 from one that carefully avoided any attachment to the pre-conciliar Mass to one that calls its members to a "respect for Catholic liturgy in all approved rites and usages from the apostolic period to the present day."[15]

It is beyond the scope of this article to determine the validity of various claims either about the Second Vatican Council or about either of the two forms of the church's liturgy. We will leave the scrutiny of the Second Vatican Council to more capable minds, and we humbly accept that the church has given us now two forms of the Mass; we will honor both as valid and legitimate means through which the church makes ever-present the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross at Calvary.

The concerns about a theological shift—or even rupture—between the traditional Mass and the Novus ordo missae *are not completely unfounded.*

At the same time, one must acknowledge that the two forms of the Mass have ostensibly different theological emphases at the least. The concerns about a theological shift—or even rupture—between the traditional Mass and the *Novus ordo missae* are not completely unfounded. For example, the orations in the *Novus ordo missae* represent a body of prayers that are significantly different from those of the traditional Mass. Looking at just the collects of the two forms of the Mass, of the sixty-six collects for Sundays and solemnities in the 1970 missal, that is, the first missal to incorporate fully the changes implemented after the Second Vatican Council, only twenty-one are retained from the 1962 missal, that is, the last missal to preserve most of the elements of the traditional Mass, without any changes. Thirteen of these sixty-six collects are carried over from the 1962 missal, but in edited versions; nine are drawn without any changes from other Mass books;[16] and fifteen are taken from other Mass books, but in edited versions. Thus, less than one third of the collects for Sundays and solemnities in the 1970 missal continue the ancient tradition represented in the collects of the 1962 missal, and less than one half of them continue a tradition represented in any ancient Mass manuscripts.[17]

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[15] From the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Society for Catholic Liturgy, September 17, 2005. The proposed changes were actually discussed at the annual meeting and then ratified by a mail vote of the membership following the meeting. See the Society's current *Statement of Principles* at http:// www.liturgysociety.org/principles.

[16] Some of these manuscripts represent a long and continued use in the Mass, while others do not. See Lauren Pristas, "The Orations of the Vatican II Missal: Policies for Revision," *Communio* 30 (2003), 648ff.

[17] Lauren Pristas, "The Collects at Sunday Mass: An Examination of the Revisions of Vatican II," *Nova et Vetera*, 3, no. 1 (2005), 8–11.

It is reasonable to ask whether or not such changes in the *novus ordo missae* represent just a theological shift or a break with the church's theological tradition. The answer to such a question must be left to a more competent authority. However, what can be elucidated here is the ever-critical role that the chants of the Mass—the music that is truly "proper to the Roman Mass,"[18]—have as a liaison between the two forms of the Mass, a liaison that insures that necessary hermeneutic of continuity from Apostolic times to the end of time.

It is reasonable to ask if changes in the Novus ordo missae *represent a theological shift or a break with the church's theological tradition.*

To demonstrate this role of the chants of the Mass, three examples will be offered. Each example will posit a collect from the 1962 missal against its counterpart in the 1970 missal. While the collects selected show significant differences between the versions in the 1962 missal and those in the 1970 missal, the chants, which are common across both missals for the selected days,[19] demonstrate a clear continuity in the theological tradition of the church, even when it is less evident in the revised collects.

The Collects and Chants of Three Selected Masses

The Collects for the First Sunday of Advent

The first example is taken from the First Sunday of Advent. In the 1962 missal, the collect reads as follows:

> Excita, quaesumus Domine, potentiam tuam, et veni: ut ab imminentibus peccatorum nostrorum periculis, te mereamur protegente eripi, te liberante salvari.
>
> Stir up thy power, we beseech thee, O Lord, and come: that from the threatening dangers of our sins we may deserve to be rescued by thy protection, and to be saved by thy deliverance.

In the 1970 missal, the choice was made to replace the collect with a revised version of the post-communion prayer for the First Sunday of Advent from the Gelasian Sacramentary:[20]

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[18] Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), ¶ 116, discusses chant as "especially suited to the Mass." This is true not only because of its historical association with the Mass, but also because it is the only music that, in its entirety, embraces all the various proper texts of the Mass. Chant is musically and textually intimately and intrinsically part of the Mass.

[19] The chants of the Mass were not subjected to the same kind of editing and rewriting as were the orations of the Mass in the revision of the missal after the Second Vatican Council. The repertoire remains intact. However, for the *Novus ordo missae*, a new cycle of scripture readings was devised. Therefore, many of the chants were moved from their traditional placements in the missal to other days, largely in an attempt to maintain the relationship between certain chants and certain passages of scripture. These changes are worthy of examination, but not relevant to this study.

[20] See Pristas, "Orations," 622.

> Da, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, cunctae familiae tuae hanc voluntatem in Christo Filio tuo Domino nostro venienti in operibus iustis aptos occurrere, et eius dexterae sociati, regnum mereantur possidere caeleste.[21]
>
> Grant, we beseech thee, almighty God, to thy whole family this will in Christ thy Son, our coming Lord, to meet [him] made fit in just deeds, and joined (or assigned) to his right, may they be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.[22]

As revised in the *Missale Romanum* (1970):

> Da quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, hanc tuis fidelibus voluntatem, ut, Christo tuo venienti iustis operibus occurrentes, eius dexterae sociati, regnum mereantur possidere caeleste.
>
> Grant thy faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet thy Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.[23]

Pristas notes that the revised collect raises a number of questions. First, why was it important to replace a collect that had enjoyed an unbroken tradition of use for twelve hundred years? (The former collect was not completely omitted from the missal. Rather, it was reassigned to the Friday of the First Week of Advent.) Second, why was the text that was chosen, also a prayer with an ancient and long tradition of use, albeit exclusively as a postcommunion prayer, edited?[24]

Why was it important to replace a collect that had enjoyed an unbroken tradition of use for twelve hundred years?

The two changes are not insignificant. The first "grant this will to your faithful" does not center the will of "God's family" in that of Christ. The second "hastening in righteous deeds to meet your coming Christ" omits the mention of the transformation of the person as an intrinsic part of being made worthy, ready, or prepared to meet the Lord.[25] One could well argue that these changes alter the underlying theology of the prayer.

However, when we sing the chants of the Mass for the First Sunday of Advent, the theological continuity rings clear, regardless of which prayers are recited.

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[21] As found in *GeV* 1139; see Pristas, "Orations," 622.

[22] Translation by Pristas, "Orations"; the word "voluntatem" could also be translated as "gift" or "desire"; However, Pristas uses the term "will" to emphasize a point well made about centering the desires or "will" of the faithful in the will of Christ.

[23] Translation as found in the forthcoming (2011) edition of *The Roman Missal.*

[24] Pristas, "Orations," 622–623.

[25] Pristas, "Orations," 622–623.

Introit

Ad te levavi animam meam: Deus meus, in te confido, non erubescam: neque irrideant me inimici mei: etenim universi, qui te exspectant non confundentur.[26]

V. Vias tuas, Domine, demonstra mihi: et semitas tuas edoce me.[27]

To thee have I lifted up my soul: in thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed: neither let my enemies laugh at me: for none of them that wait on thee shall be confounded.

V. Show, O Lord, thy ways to me: and teach me thy paths.

Gradual

Universi, qui te exspectant, non confundentur, Domine.

V. Vias tuas, Domine, notas fac mihi: et semitas tuas edoce me.[28]

All they that wait on thee shall not be confounded, O Lord.

V. Make known, O Lord, thy ways to me: and teach me thy paths.

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia. *V.* Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutare tuum da nobis.[29]

Alleluia, alleluia. *V.* Show us, O Lord, thy mercy; and grant us thy salvation.

Offertory

Ad te levavi animam meam: Deus meus, in te confido, non erubescam: neque irrideant me inimici mei: etenim universi, qui te exspectant non confundentur.[30]

To thee have I lifted up my soul: in thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be ashamed: neither let my enemies laugh at me: for none of them that wait on thee shall be confounded.

One cannot sing "Ad te levavi" of the introit, later echoed in the offertory chant and not picture Christ in heaven submitting himself unconditionally to the will of his Father that he become incarnate, suffer, and die for the sins of all humanity, that same unconditional submission that he would give again in the Garden of Gethsemane. The gradual chant, "All who await will not be confounded," is sung in the context of the Epistle to the Romans: "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the desires of the flesh."[31] We wait for the coming of the Lord both at Christmas and at the end of time, by conforming our wills to that of the Father, in Christ, and by allowing ourselves to be transformed by that same submission of self. The verses chosen for both the introit and the gradual reinforce this notion emphatically.

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[26] Ps. 24:1–3.

[27] Ps. 24:4.

[28] Ps. 24:3–4.

[29] Ps. 84:8.

[30] Ps. 24:1–3.

[31] Rom. 13:11–14.

While it may be regrettable that the current collect for this Sunday is not as clear theologically as might be desired, the chants of this Sunday offset this lack of clarity by providing a powerful source of continuity with the traditional theology of this Mass.

The Collects for Easter Day

The second example comes from the other end of the liturgical year, Easter. The collect for Easter Sunday in the 1962 missal is as follows:

> Deus, qui hodierna die, per Unigenitum tuum, aeternitatis nobis aditum, devicta morte, reserasti, da nobis, quaesumus, ut vota nostra, quae praeveniendo aspiras, etiam adiuvando prosequere.
>
> O God, who on this day through thine Only-begotten Son hast, by his having vanquished death, unlocked for us the gate of eternity, grant us, we beseech thee, that thou also accompany our desires, which thou dost inspire by thine antecedent grace, with thine assistance.[32]

This collect was identified by Bruylants in 1966 as "corrupt," at which time he proposed to the Consilium that the prayer be restored to the form in the Gelasian Sacramentary:[33]

> Deus, qui hodierna die, per Unigenitum tuum, aeternitatis nobis aditum, devicta morte, reserasti, da nobis, quaesumus, ut qui resurrectionis dominicae sollemnia colimus, per innovationem tui Spiritus a morte animae resurgamus.[34]
>
> O God, who on this day through thine Only-begotten Son hast, by his having vanquished death, unlocked for us the gate of eternity, grant us, we beseech thee, that through the renewal of the Holy Spirit, we may rise from death of soul.[35]

The text that was finally adopted for the 1969 missal begins with that of the Gelasian Sacramentary, but it concludes with an emended version of the text:

> Deus, qui hodierna die, per Unigenitum tuum, aeternitatis nobis aditum, devicta morte, reserasti, da nobis, quaesumus, ut qui resurrectionis dominicae sollemnia colimus, per innovationem tui Spiritus in lumine vitae resurgamus.
>
> O God, who on this day, through thine Only-Begotten Son, hast conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity, grant, we pray, that we who keep the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection may, through the renewal brought by thy Spirit, rise up in the light of life.[36]

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[32] Translation by Pristas, "Orations," 650.

[33] Pristas, "Orations" 634, 636, 649, 650.

[34] As found in 61 *GeV* 463; cited in Pristas, "Orations," 650.

[35] Translation by Pristas, "Orations."

[36] Translation as found in the forthcoming (2011) edition of *The Roman Missal.*

One cannot argue theologically about the use of the phrase "in lumine vitae" instead of "a morte animae." Both are theologically sound.

At the same, from the perspective of "continuity with the tradition," one might well argue about both the rationale of the Consilium for replacing the collect in the 1962 missal and also its decision to emend the prayer it chose. The collect in the 1962 missal enjoys a long and hallowed tradition in the Mass.[37] There is evidence that the prayer was developed as a result of controversies "in the fifth and sixth centuries around the doctrine of grace."[38] The Consilium's notion that the prayer was "corrupt" is given without foundation and against what the tradition would indicate.[39]

The collect taken from the Gelasian Sacramentary enjoys, of course, a similarly long and hallowed tradition within the church. However, the emendation of this prayer, while not theologically inaccurate, is completely without precedence in the tradition. It is, from a textual standpoint, an innovation.

The chants of Easter, however, provide not only a critical theological continuity in the Mass, but also the sense of joy in the Resurrection that the members of the Consilium seem to have been concerned was not adequately represented in the collect.

Introit

Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum, alleluia: posuisti super me manum tuam, alleluia: mirabilis facta est scientia tua, alleluia, alleluia.[40]

I arose, and am still with thee, alleluia; thou hast laid thy hand upon me, alleluia; thy knowledge is become wonderful, alleluia, alleluia.

Gradual

Haec dies quam fecit Dominus: exultemus, et laetemur in ea.

V. Confitemini Domino, quoniam bonus: quoniam in saeculum misericordia eius.[41]

This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.

V. Give praise unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Alleluia

Alleluia, alleluia. *V*. Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus.[42]

Alleluia, alleluia. *V*. Christ our Pasch is immolated.

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[37] Miss. Sar. in die Paschæ, fol. lxxxv. Miss. Ambros. Pamel. Liturg. tom i. p. 354. Sacramentar. Gelasii Muratori Lit. Rom. tom. i. p. 574. Gregorii Sacr. Menard. p. 75. Muratori Liturg. Rom. tom. ii. p. 67. Miss. Gall. Vet. Mabillon Lit. Gall. p. 366. MS. Leofr. fol. 115. From: http://anglicanhistory.org/palmer/palmer19.html#o40

[38] See Sister Mary Gonzaga Haessly, *Rhetoric in the Sunday Collects of the Roman Missal: with Introduction, Text, Commentary and Translation* (Saint Louis: Manufacturers Printery, 1938), p. 4; cited in Pristas, "Orations," 650.

[39] See Pristas, "Orations," 649ff.

[40] Ps. 138:18, 5, 6.

[41] Ps. 117:24, 1.

[42] 1 Cor. 5:7.

Sequence

Victimae Paschali laudes immolent Christiani
Agnus redemit oves; Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores.
Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando; dux vitae mortuus, regnat vivus.
Dic nobis, Maria, quid vidisti in via?
Sepulchrum Christi viventis et gloriam vidi resurgentis.
Angelicos testes, sudarium et vestes.
Surrexit Christus spes mea: praecedet vos in Galilaeam.
Scimus Christum surrexisse a mortuis vere; tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere. Amen. Alleluia.

Christians! to the Paschal Victim offer your thankful praises.
The Lamb redeemeth the sheep: Christ, who only is sinless, reconcileth sinners to the Father.
Death and life contended in that conflict stupendous: the Prince of Life, who died, deathless reigneth.
Speak, Mary, declaring what thou sawest wayfaring.
"The tomb of Christ who now liveth: and likewise the glory of the Risen.
Bright Angels attesting, the shroud and napkin resting.
Yea, Christ my hope is arisen: to Galilee he goeth before you."
We know that Christ is risen, henceforth ever living: Have mercy, Victor King, giving pardon. Amen. Alleluia.

Offertory

Terra tremuit et quievit, dum resurgeret in iudicio Deus, alleluia.[43]

The earth trembled and was still when God arose in judgment, alleluia.

Communion

Pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus, alleluia: itaque epulemur in azymis sinceritatis, et veritatis, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.[44]

Christ our Pasch is immolated, alleluia: therefore let us feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The introit offers the image of Christ himself, crying out in gratitude to his eternal Father as he rises from the tomb.[45] The gradual is formed with the joyous words from Ps. 117, "This is the day, which the Lord hath made,"—but sung only after we have cast off sin, "the leaven of malice and

[43] Ps. 75:9–10.

[44] 1 Cor 5:7, 8.

[45] Dom Prosper Guéranger, O.S.B., *The Liturgical Year*, tr. Dom Laurence Shepherd, O.S.B., 15 volumes (Dublin: James Duffy, 1890; London: Paternoster Row, 1890); abridged version, 1949; reprint (Great Falls, Mont.: St. Bonaventure Press, 2000), vol. 7: *Paschal Time*, Book 1, p. 143.

wickedness" of which Paul speaks in the epistle.[46] The Alleluia sings of salvation achieved through the selfless sacrifice of Christ; the sequence retells the story of Easter morning; the offertory relates the trembling of the earth when God "arose in judgment" over sin and death; and the communion chant calls us to partake of the "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," subtly recalling the admonition of St. Paul in the epistle to cast off first the "leavened bread of sin." While the chants of Easter are rapturously joyful, they contain no hint of presumption. We enter the joy of Easter in so much as we cast off sin and the death it brings to the soul.

The chants of Easter are rapturously joyful, they contain no hint of presumption.

The Collects for Feast of the Most Holy Trinity (Trinity Sunday)

The third example examines the collects for the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. Just as with the first two examples, this third example shows the chants of the Mass as holding a key role in maintaining theological continuity between the two forms of the Mass. However, in this case, the link between the old and the new that the chant provides is of a slightly different nature. It would appear that the revised collect for Trinity Sunday develops a decidedly different theme from that of the 1962 missal. It is, then, the role of the chants of the Mass to affirm that this new direction is faithful to the tradition.

As has been seen with the earlier examples in this study, the collect for Trinity Sunday in the 1962 missal also enjoys a long history in the Mass. "It appears, without a single textual variation, seventy times in sixty-eight pre-Tridentine codices from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries."[47]

> Omnipotens, sempiterne Deus, qui dedisti famulis tuis in confessione verae fidei, aeternae Trinitatis gloriam agnoscere, et in potentia maiestatis adorare Unitatem: quaesumus: ut eiusdem fidei firmitate, ab omnibus semper muniamur adversis.
>
> Almighty, everlasting God, who granted thy servants in confession of the true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and to worship the Unity in power of majesty; we beseech thee: that in the steadfastness of the same faith we may ever be defended from all adversities.[48]

This collect acknowledges God's wondrous mercy, through which has been granted us the faith to worship the Trinity. It also begs that we might, through that same merciful grace, remain steadfast in our faith not only that we might worship the Trinity, but also that we might be protected from all evil. "The prayer is utterly humble and without any presumption, and yet sees clearly to the heart of the matter: faith makes us God's servants and steadfast faith in the one true God, which is itself his gift, is our only defense against all that opposes us."[49]

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[46] I Cor. 5:8.

[47] Lauren Pristas, "*Missale Romanum* 1962 and 1970: A Comparative Study of Two Collects," *Antiphon* 7:3 (2002), 31.

[48] Translation by Pristas, "*Missale Romanum*," 30–31.

[49] Pristas, "*Missale Romanum*," 31.

"The *qui* clause of the 1970 collect is a new composition formulated by the revisers. The petition of the 1970 collect is adapted from the *qui* clause of the 1962 collect."[50]

> Deus Pater, qui, Verbum veritatis et Spiritum sanctificationis mittens in mundum, admirabile mysterium tuum hominibus declarasti, da nobis, in confessione verae fidei, aeternae gloriam Trinitatis agnoscere, et Unitatem adorare in potentia maiestatis.
>
> God our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race thy wondrous mystery, grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith, we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory and adore thy Unity, powerful in majesty.[51]

In the newly composed phrase, this collect explicitly places the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity in the context of salvation history. It also asks for the gift of faith, but only that we might, through faith, worship the true God. The collect has dropped the notion that a steadfast faith is critical in order to avoid evil, and that it is only through the mercy of God that we are granted this critical defense against sin. The utter need that we have of God's protection through his gift of faith is absent.

However, once again, if we examine the chants of this Mass, we see quickly that this fundamental truth has not been lost from the Mass.

Introit

Benedicta sit sancta Trinitas, atque indivisa Unitas: confitemur et, quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.[52]

V. Domine Dominus noster, quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra![53]

Blessed be the Holy Trinity and undivided Unity: we will give glory to him, because he hath shown his mercy to us.

V. O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is thy name in all the earth!

Offertory

Benedictus sit Deus Pater, unigenitusque Dei Filius, Sanctus quoque Spiritus: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.[54]

Blessed be God the Father, and the only-begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit; because he hath shown his mercy to us.

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[50] Pristas, "*Missale Romanum*."

[51] Translation as found in the forthcoming (2011) edition of *The Roman Missal*.

[52] Tob.12:6.

[53] Ps. 8:2.

[54] Tob. 12:6.

Communion

Benedicimus Deum coeli: et coram omnibus viventibus confitebimur ei: quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam.

We bless the God of heaven, and before all living we will praise him; because he has shown his mercy to us.

The introit, offertory and communion chants all end with the phrase, "quia fecit nobiscum misericordiam suam." (for he has cast his mercy upon us.) In this sense, they conform more to the 1970 collect in their notion that it is only through the mercy of God that we are given the faith necessary to worship him as the one, true and triune God. The chants, too, do not refer to the need for God's protection from sin through the gift of faith. However, the emphasis in the chants and the emphasis in the 1962 collect develop a profound theological complementarity: the gift of God's faith not only enables us to worship him, but also gives us the strength to avoid evil.

This complementarity is, unfortunately, absent in the 1970 missal, and one could well argue that the collect in the 1970 missal for this feast results in an important theological truth being taken from the Mass. Nevertheless, the chants of this Mass do affirm a deep and long continuity between the 1970 collect and the church's theological tradition. One can rest assured of a certain hermeneutic of continuity with what has been retained, even if one might wish that the continuity had been more broadly maintained.

Conclusion

The Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* has brought a number of important discussions in the church into the open, such as the true nature of the Second Vatican Council as a pastoral council and how this must guide its evaluation and its implementation, and, certainly, just if and how the *Novus ordo missae* maintains continuity with the apostolic tradition that makes the church what she is.

With regard to the implementation of the Second Vatican Council, one of its more important mandates involves the chants of the Mass. While the council maintained that the chants of the Mass were the music "especially suited to the Mass,"[56] other mandates of the council, such as the "full and active participation by all the people,"[57] were interpreted in such a way as to eliminate effectively the chants of the Mass.

However, as the three examples offered in this article demonstrate, it is the chants of the Mass that connect, at the least, the revised collects of the Mass to the tradition of the church in ways that these orations cannot always effectively accomplish on their own. Thus, if the recently reinvigorated discussions about the *Novus ordo missae* and its continuity with the tradition of the church are to result in a true affirmation of that continuity, the chants of the Mass—and their restoration to regular use in the liturgy—are a critical component of that hermeneutic.

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[55] Tob. 12:6.

[56] Second Vatican Council, Constituion on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), ¶116, accessed November 19, 2010 <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html>.

[57] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶14.

Polyphony to Polyfilla[1]

By Joseph Cullen

After his recent visit to Britain, Pope Benedict spoke warmly of the excellence of some of the liturgies which he celebrated here and of the service of Vespers in Westminster Abbey. Sadly such excellence is untypical of the vast majority of our churches. There is a glaring lack of sympathy for the heritage which should be the bedrock of a worthy sacred music in today's church and it is hard to discern any attention to the 1967 Instruction on Music in the Sacred Liturgy *Musicam Sacram*.

Music is vitally important in the liturgy. Yet it receives less attention than the other liturgical arts and the church is less exacting in its attitude to ability and training than it is with architecture, the making of vestments, catechesis, and the formation of the clergy. When the Mass in English was introduced in the 1960s, there was a dearth of suitable ritual music in the vernacular. The first need was for Mass settings—for those intrinsic parts whose texts are already there but which rely on being set to music to *solemnify* them. One effect was that hymns started to be used as filler, *anything* to sing which was in the "new" language. Hymns intended for use in devotions, Benediction, holy hours, came to be used inordinately—often inappropriately—at Sunday Mass.

There was a second effect. Settings of the Ordinary of the Mass were urgently needed. Some, notably by capable monk-composers, had a certain dignity. But there was a free-for-all, especially in the seventies, when unsuitable settings used the same trite tunes for the different parts of the Mass Ordinary, illicitly paraphrasing the texts to fit and lacking any affinity to the words.

There is a glaring lack of sympathy for the heritage which should be the bedrock of a worthy sacred music in today's church.

The church guards the texts of its rites with diligence. But there are no checks on the texts and settings used in liturgical music. Low quality material both in inspiration and facility is commonplace. The inappropriateness of association goes unnoticed (e.g. "Plaisir d'amour/My God Loves Me," "Say Goodbye, My Own True Lover/Vaster Far Than Any Ocean," etc.) Double standards in the scrutiny of musical repertoire are baffling in an organization which lets some away with no leeway at all in other areas. This is to say nothing of the ineptness of much melody-writing, the stultifying limitation of harmonic treatment of accompaniments, and the unhappy marriages of syllables to musical notes in so much current repertoire. The misuse of one booming voice behind a microphone, an ecclesiastical karaoke, seems to have killed off unified congregational singing—the church's vox pop.

Joseph Cullen is director of the London Symphony Chorus. A version of this piece ran in the London Telegraph.

[1] [Polyfilla: originally a type of plaster-like filler used to make minor building repairs; in a figurative sense, something used to fill a gap or hide faults, especially superfluous language, Ed.]

This is not an argument about categories—so-called classical music versus pop versus what-we-call-folk. The music of the Catholic Church should not be necessarily allied to Western art music any more than any other type, but much of it has been de facto best served by conventionally-trained musicians. There is also, of course, an official Roman Church music which is dedicated to its purpose. Much of it is simple incanted music, one note to a syllable (as in prefaces and introductory rites) or chanted to a simple, recurring tone (psalm verses) and its more ornate, longer-lasting form is plainsong, or Gregorian chant. It has existed for centuries but, as a contemporary Catholic, you might hardly know it. It seems culturally ironic that the beauties of "our" chant (for it really does belong to the church) are now sought out in recorded performance by those who probably have never heard it in church. There also happens to be the role that plainsong has played in the development of at least five centuries of Western music. This is surely a measure of its richness.

The disenchanted Romans have nowhere to go.

Yet few capable or sensitive musicians would wish to be involved with the current norms of Roman Catholic music. I say this with the personal proviso that much of my inspiration and experience was gained from the church and its nurturing musicians, teachers, clergy, and religious. The heritage of its language and its music forms the majority of my current professional wherewithal. The church has always been a breeding ground for musicians and the melting pot for much in the arts down the ages and this should not change now.

As to the question of the instrumental accompaniment of the liturgy, the official line is that the organ is to be held in the highest esteem for this function. Organs and organists are affected by the same spiral of despair as above, but a lead is being given in many quarters as to the unique role which this king of instruments offers. I see a revival in the commissioning of new organs and in the transplanting of suitable redundant organs of quality.

There is a way forward: chapter and verse. To begin with, nobody who has any part in the liturgy should begin without studying the Instruction on the Sacred Liturgy. Bishops' conferences have to authorize an adherence to the highest-attainable standards of quality in liturgical music. The elected church-music committees of the bishops' conferences cannot have vested interests in promoting their own music or type of music. This would be regarded as corrupt in any other field. Indeed, such guiding groups should comprise experienced, outstanding, and visionary individuals and not those who just happen to have an interest in the area.

Then comes training. There are many musicians out there who could do this work and some are already working in the field. I don't think it is viable to establish a full-time Catholic establishment for the purpose, but rather to offer specialist formation on an in-service basis and also to send those who are moved to use their gifts for the church's good to existing musical establishments for the groundwork.

Disaffected Anglicans might be able to defect to Rome, but the disenchanted Romans have nowhere to go, and their rightful place is within the church and not in some minority faction. We can all see resurgence in choral activity in the U.K.; it needs to be nurtured in the place of its birth.

Kyrie "Cunctipotens Genitor Deus" *Alternatim*

by William Mahrt

Kyrie IV, named for the Latin text to which it was once sung, "Cunctipotens Genitor Deus, Omnicreator, eleison," is one of the most widely distributed Kyrie melodies. The inventory of manuscript sources of Kyrie melodies by Margaretha Landwehr-Melnicki[1] lists more manuscript sources for this Kyrie than for any other.[2] It was frequently assigned to Marian feasts, with the text "Rex virginum amator Deus," and in its Marian assignment served as the *cantus firmus* for Guillaume de Machaut's *Messe Nostre Dame*. Machaut's mass is the first complete mass cycle by a known composer (including Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei as a coherent set), but it stands in the context of a wide cultivation of polyphonic music for the Ordinary of the Mass. During the fourteenth century and into the beginning of the fifteenth century, this music consisted mainly of single independent movements, unrelated to each other in melody or mode, much like the chants for the ordinary.[3] Often these polyphonic movements were based upon a well-known chant, such as Kyrie IV.

The inventory of manuscript sources lists more manuscript sources for Kyrie IV than for any other.

One such a setting comes from the Trent Codices, a set of seven manuscripts copied 1445–75 containing an enormous repertory of sacred music.[4] I give it here because of its potential for use in today's liturgy. It consists of three polyphonic sections, Kyrie, Christe, Kyrie. It is likely that these settings were originally performed just as their chant models were, as a nine-fold polyphonic

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[1] Margaretha Landwehr-Melnicki, *Das einstimmige Kyrie des lateinischen Mittelalters* (München : Mikrokopie G.m.b.H., 1954) a doctoral dissertation at the University of Erlangen cataloging all the Kyrie melodies in the extensive archive of microfilms of chant manuscripts assembled by Bruno Stäblein.

[2] See the table of melodies in my "Gregorian Chant as a Fundamentum of Western Musical Culture," *Sacred Music,* 102, no. 1 (Spring 1975), 19–20; this was an address to the Sixth International Church Music Congress in Salzburg, August 1974, and this data was a basis for the selection of melodies for the *Liber Cantualis* (Sablé-sur-Sarthe: Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, 1978), pp. 17–54.

[3] This repertory can be found throughout the series *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, 24 vols. (Monaco: Editions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1956–1991).

[4] A selection of works from these manuscripts has been published in *Sechs [Sieben] Trienter Codices: Geistliche und weltliche Compositionen des XV. Jahrhunderts, 1.–7. Auswahl*, Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, Bd. 14–15, 22, 38, 53, 61, 76, 120 (Vienna: Artaria, 1900–70).

Kyrie, that is, the single Kyrie section was sung three times, the single Christe, three times, and then the second Kyrie, three times. There are some settings, however, that indicate an *alternatim* performance—direct alternation between chant and polyphony: Kyrie (chant), Kyrie (polyphony), Kyrie (chant), Christe (polyphony), Christe, (chant), Christe (polyphony), Kyrie (chant), Kyrie (polyphony), Kyrie (chant). As is so often the case with liturgical manuscripts, well-established conventions are not indicated in the manuscript at all; thus for a Kyrie simply containing a single Kyrie, a single Christe, and a single Kyrie, the arrangement as a nine-fold Kyrie would be left to the singers, who knew well enough what to do.

The present Kyrie has such an arrangement, one Kyrie, one Christe, and another Kyrie in polyphony. Being based upon the chant melody for Kyrie IV, the second Kyrie differs from the first, as does the chant upon which it is based. My own choir has sung this Kyrie for longer than I can remember, and alternated it with the congregation. The congregation often sings the nine-fold chant by itself and upon a few important occasions we then incorporate the polyphonic setting in alternation with the congregation. One might think that the congregation would resent having part of their performance co-opted by the choir, but the opposite is the case: this manner of performance incorporates them into a polyphonic performance, something they could not achieve by themselves. Their singing is most often more enthusiastic on such an occasion than it is when they sing the chant alone. They often comment on this.

As is so often the case with liturgical manuscripts, well-established conventions are not indicated in the manuscript at all.

There are several ways to arrange the alternation; among them: (1) direct alternation beginning and ending with the chant; (2) direct alternation beginning and ending with polyphony; (3) three-fold alternation, i.e., cantors singing the first chant versicle, congregation singing the second, and choir singing the polyphonic versicle; (4) direct alternation between choir and three soloists, using either of the schemes above. I have given the first arrangement here, though from what I have given, the others could also be done. (In order to make the alternation as clear as possible, I have written out the repeat of the polyphonic Christe versicle.)

The chant begins with a characteristic contour for a Kyrie—a prevalence of generally descending motion, appropriate for Kyrie melodies, since it suggests a gesture of deference and humility. The initial melody begins around the reciting tone, *a*,[5] and after a gentle rise to *c*, begins a systemtic descent to the final, *D*. The Christe has an even more consistently descending contour, moving downward directly from the reciting note *a*. The final Kyrie, however, takes a surprising turn: begin-

[5] Pitches are here designated by the Guidonian system, i.e., upper case for the octave *A*–*G* completely below middle *c*, lower case for the octave *a*–*g* surrounding middle *c*, and double lower case for the fifth *aa*–*ee*, completely above middle *c*.

ning on the final, *D*, it rises a fifth, makes an additional rise to *c*, recalling the similar rise at the beginning of the first Kyrie, and, after dipping down to *E*, rises and ends upon the reciting note *a*. One might think this to represent a more hopeful turn after the deference of the first versicles, but it is an unusual turn, since it leaves the cadence on the reciting note, not the final. Theorists have designated such a note a confinal, to indicate its affinity with the actual final.

The polyphony is for two sopranos and one tenor. Their ranges are quite moderate, almost exactly the same as that of the chant—the two soprano parts have identical ranges, including one note below the chant range; the tenor includes one note above the chant range. Thus any singer who can accomplish the range of the chant can also sing the polyphony. A distinctive characteristic of the polyphony is that the two soprano voices cross frequently; this gives the texture an interesting variety, because even equal voices invariably differ slightly in timbre.

The chant melody is incorporated directly into the polyphony, but with some variety. It is carried by the first soprano in the first and last Kyrie versicles, but by the tenor in the Christe. It is polyphony only in the most general sense of the word, since the texture is completely note-against-note, accompanying the chant melody exactly, even without a suspension at the cadence. Still, the crossing of the upper voices allows the incorporation of some contrary motion into the texture, e.g., in mm. 5–7 of the Christe, an element of polyphony.

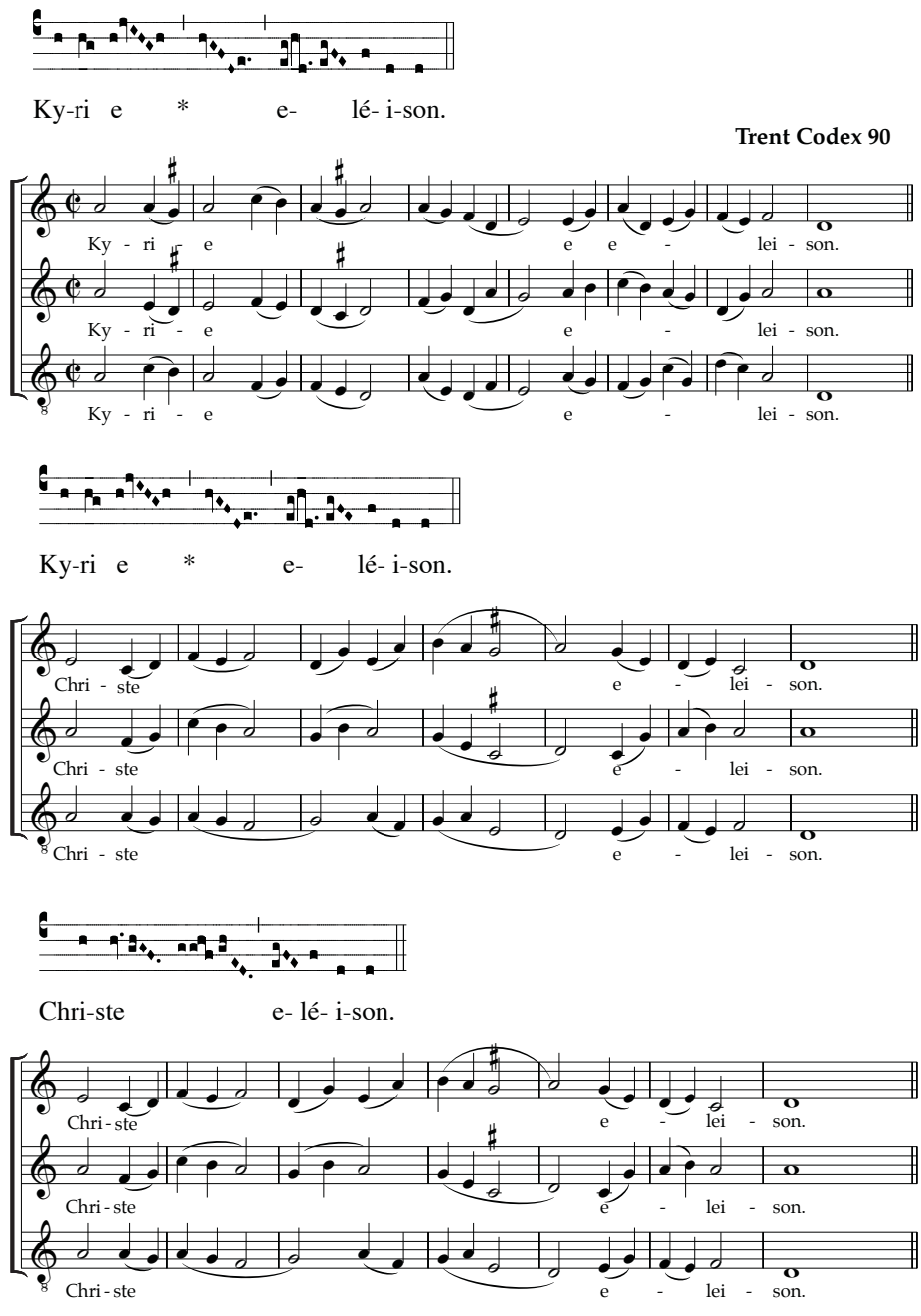
As always the alternation of chant with polyphony, the striking contrast between the two is an advantage to both.

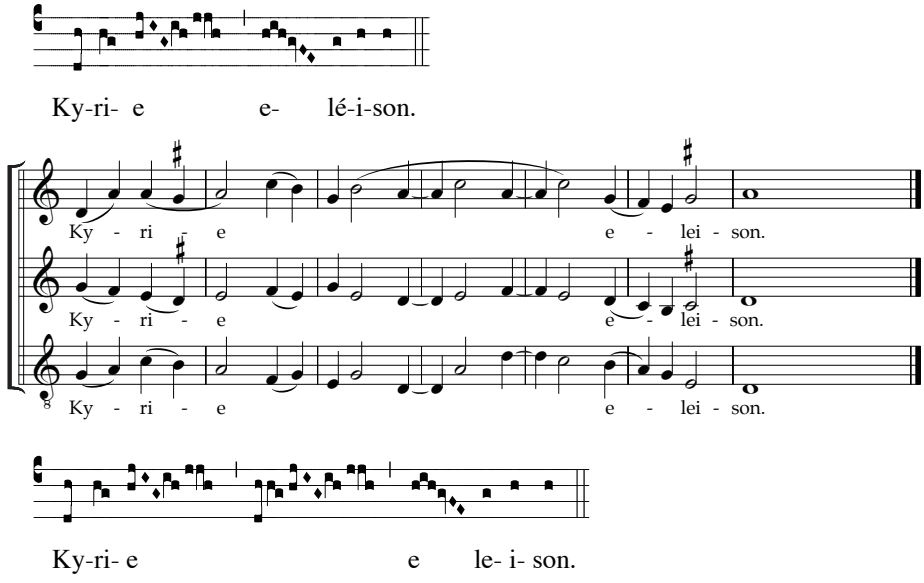
The theory of counterpoint in the fifteenth century prescribes beginning and ending with perfect intervals, and moving through imperfect intervals; it prohibits parallel perfect intervals, but permits parallel imperfect intervals. Fifteenth-century compositions, such as the works of Dufay, show mainly imperfect intervals between the perfect beginning and ending notes of a phrase, with plenty of parallel sixths and tenths. Calculating the intervals between the outermost sounding voices of the present Kyrie shows a different pattern—nearly equal use of perfect (octaves and twelfths) and imperfect intervals (tenths, sixths, and thirds), more characteristic of the fourteenth century than the fifteenth. This suggests that by the time of the copying of the Trent Codices, this piece was quite old, or else in a notably archaic style.

The tempo of the polyphony should be commensurate with that of the chant. A quarter note of the polyphony should be roughly equal to the single notes of the chant. Tuning is crucial, especially of the perfect intervals, which do not tolerate inexact tuning. The sonority and the tuning of the piece are helped by singing fairly bright vowells. It is useful to rehearse two voices at a time, the chant-bearing voice with each of the other two voices. If a good balance between the voices in terms of both volume and tuning can be achieved for each of these pairs, then the sonority of the whole piece will be very good.

As always in the alternation of chant with polyphony, the striking contrast between the two is an advantage to both; as a listener told me after such a performance (of somewhat later music), the chant makes the polyphony sound so rich, and the polyphony makes the chant sound so pure.

Kyrie cunctipotens genitor Deus

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ARCHIVE

Pitchfalls in Chant Pitch

by Theodore Marier

[This article appeared in the *Caecilia*, 82, no. 6 (Sept.–Oct. 1955), 235–36.]

Because of a certain striking parallel that exists between the spiritual life and "on pitch" singing, the work of the choirmaster is, in a very real sense, similar to that of the retreat master. The latter says: "Human beings without the help of grace will tend to go down into the pit." The former says: "Singing groups without adequate skills, will tend to go down in pitch." Monsignor Knox in his recent book *A Retreat for Lay People* mentions this relationship between fallen nature and falling pitch. He says,

> When you have a lot of people singing without organ accompaniment, there is a constant tendency for the note to drop all the time; it gets lower and lower as it goes on. And therefore, when the choir isn't accustomed to singing without accompaniment, every now and then the choirmaster, who has a pitch-pipe concealed on his person, gives a little *toot* in the background, to remind them of the higher note which they ought to be taking, and aren't . . . All the time, the note on which our lives are lived is dropping, dropping, till it's ready to die away into our boots, a*nd we don't notice*, just as the choir doesn't notice when the note drops.[1]

Since, without training, singing ensembles tend naturally to go flat, they must work diligently and skillfully to raise the pitch of their singing just as all of us must work to raise the "note on which we live." One of the functions of the choirmaster, therefore, is to locate the likely "pitchfalls" for the singers and to offer an effective antidote to the down-drag of nature's pitch-slumping tendency. There are specific means available to the choirmaster for developing an awareness on the part of the singers of downward deviations from a fixed pitch and means of correcting the same. Our purpose here is to show where these danger zones are located in chant, especially in psalmody, and to suggest possible remedies.

Choirmasters often ask why it is that flatting is so noticeable in the singing of chant. Curious as it may seem, chant all too often suffers from this musical malady. In fact, it seems more characteristic of the average performances of chant than of almost any other type of vocal music. There are several reasons why this may be true. In chant, for instance, all the tonal weight of singing is on one

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Theodore Marier (October 17, 1912–February 24, 2001) was a composer, church musician, educator, and scholar of Gregorian chant. He founded the Boston Archdiocesan Choir School in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1963, and served as the second president of the Church Music Association of America.

[1] Msgr. Ronald Knox, *A Retreat for Lay People* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1955), p. 122.

line. This being so, the entire mass of the unison sound tends to take the path of least resistance, which as we have seen above, is downward. Then, too, the range of the average chant melody is usually through the middle of the vocal register, and the intensity of sound required usually lies between *piano* and *mezzo forte*. These conditions often result in inadequate breath preparation on the part of the singer, so that the melodic line is lacking in what would normally be a pitch-lifting power: good breath support. It is no surprise to find then, that the last note of a cadence is so often below the fixed pitch. If more physical effort were required to sing the average chant melody, if the music contained, for example, extremely high, low, or loud passages, the singers would probably prepare to sing the phrases by breathing more deeply and thus strive to achieve more accurate pitch levels than they do. Finally, chant is always on the move. There are no long pauses in the chant melodies, no long notes where singers can stop to check their tonal bearings. The longest single note-group in chant, the *tristropha*, is one of three quick counts. Because the chant line is in constant state of motion, those intervals which should be given special pitch treatment, tend to fly past the singers before they have had a chance to grasp them and control them.

Nor can the use of the organ accompaniment guarantee to sustain an accurate pitch level of the chant. How often congregations of adults or of children go flat on the third note of Kyrie XI and remain below the pitch for the rest of the composition in spite of a strong organ accompaniment; or in communities where the office is chanted, how often does the flatting occur during the first verse of the psalm and remain below the organ pitch for the remainder of the psalm; or even where the office is recited on one tone, how common it is to hear an entire group of psalms and antiphons sung slightly below the pitch in spite of attempts on the part of the organist to "lift" the pitch by using four-foot stops, light reeds, or even mixtures! Adding more power or color to the accompaniment never raises the pitch but merely prevents the musical edifice from going down in total collapse, and, what is more, adding decibel counts to the organ accompaniment makes the organ become a highly obtrusive element in the rendering of the chant (scarcely a satisfactory condition for music in worship!)

The singers themselves must be able to adjust the pitch of their singing upwards or downwards according to the needs of the moment.

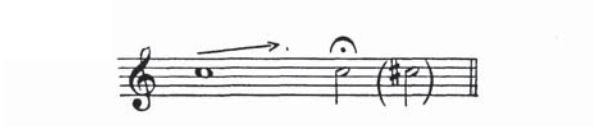
Experienced choir directors know that the choir must be able to sing the chant on correct pitch without accompaniment before effective use of the organ can be made as an accompaniment medium. The reason for this is that the organ, sustaining the tones of the mode in the background of the melodic line, functions only as a point of reference at the cadence points or at the breathing places. The singers themselves must be able to adjust the pitch of their singing upwards or downwards at these points according to the needs of the moment for the obvious reason that they cannot hear the organ while they are singing. If they can hear the organ all the while they are singing, the organ is too loud!

It is up to the singers, then, to learn to avoid being dragged down "into the pit." We shall take it for granted that the singers have been instructed in correct posture and breathing, as these are basic to any good singing, and concentrate our attention here on those places in any chant line—pitchfalls—where flatting is most likely to occur. In the aggregate these are the following:

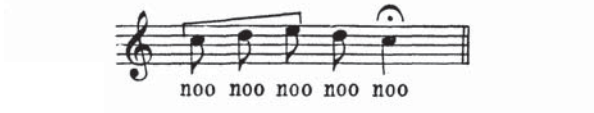
1. The reciting tone.
2. Ascending major thirds sung step-wise: (*do-re-mi; fa-sol-la; sol-la-ti*).
3. Descending major thirds sung step-wise: (reverse of above).
4. Descending and ascending half steps: (*fa-mi; do-ti; te-la*).
5. Alternating notes: (*re-mi-re; la-ti-la; do-ti-do*, etc.)

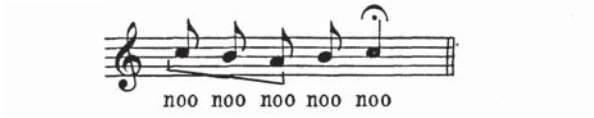
Control of these areas can lead to improved "on pitch" singing. By control is meant the ability to sing at will any of the intervals described, either higher or lower than the fixed pitch of the equal-tempered piano or organ.

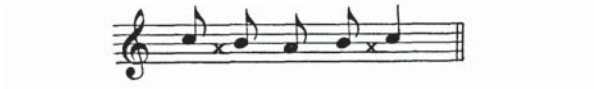
The following set of exercises is intended to correspond to the set of pitchfalls listed above. They are to be practiced a *tempo*, that is, at about the speed with which these notes would be sung if they occurred in a chant composition. The first note only is given by an instrument with fixed pitch; the singer performs the series of notes expanding the ascending intervals and contracting the descending intervals in such a way as to arrive at the last note on a pitch that is higher than that of the starting tone. The ascent in pitch should be gradual so that the accumulated rises over the series of notes that comprise the exercise do not exceed one-half step; one-quarter of a step would be best for the purposes of the exercises.



(Sing numbers from 1 — 10 slowly. At 10 the pitch should be ½ step above starting point.





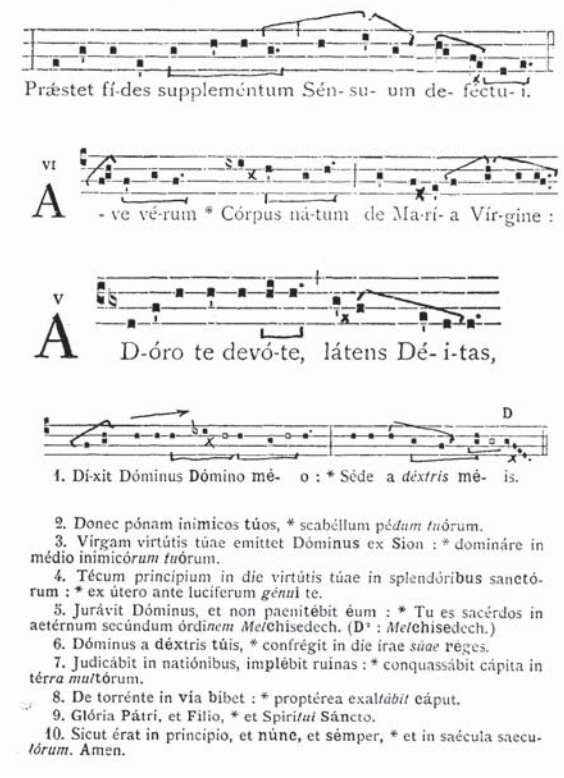


Now repeat these exercises using the note A as a starting point; using the note F (above middle C); the note D (high D for the higher voices and low D for the lower voices).

MARKING THE DANGER ZONES

For the purposes of locating the danger zones for flatting in chants we are likely to sing, a set of signs has been devised which if used, may be helpful. The arrow, brackets, and "x" as shown on the music below call attention to the areas where the flatting is most likely to occur. To the singers these signs mark the danger zones. They have been added here to several well known chants whose pitchfalls are likewise well known.

The Test: Give the first note only with the piano or organ; practice on "noo" without accompaniment; test the pitch at the end of the line. The singers must aim to make the last note higher than the first if the exercise is to be functional. Repeat the exercise using the words and aim for the same high pitch at the end.



In psalmody, the exercises might follow such a pattern as this one: Take initial tone only from the piano or organ; sing psalm formula on "noo"; test for pitch height at the mediant and final cadences. If *at will* the singers can be shown to have produced an elevation of the pitch by one quarter of a tone at the mediant and final cadences, they may sing the text of the psalm, not before. If they succeed in raising the pitch they now repeat the psalm tone *a tempo* with text. Tests for high pitch are now made only at the ends of the psalm lines.

Mark other tones similarly and practice as above.

The curious fact that springs from trying to sing sharp is that instead of erring on the side of singing too high—as one would expect from the above exercises—amateur singing groups actually do no more than raise the pitch from the flat side of the tones to some point that is closer to the center of the true pitch. They rarely will sing too high. After experience produces confidence, the singers can relax and be ready to lift or lower the pitch (no need to show them how to lower the pitch as they tend to do this naturally!) when and if the conductor signals them to do so.

DOCUMENTS

Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to The Grand Chancellor of The Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music on the Hundredth Anniversary of Its Foundation[1]

To my Venerable Brother Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski,
Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music

One hundred years have passed since my holy Predecessor Pius X founded the School of Sacred Music, which Pope Pius XI raised to the rank of "Pontifical Institute" twenty years later. This important anniversary is a cause for joy to all enthusiasts of sacred music, but more generally for those, starting of course with Pastors of the Church, who have at heart the dignity of the liturgy, of which sacred song is an integral part.[2] I am therefore particularly pleased to express my warm congratulations for this activity and to convey my cordial good wishes to you, Venerable Brother, to the President and to the entire community of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music.

This Institute, which is dependent on the Holy See, is part of the unique academic situation established by the Pontifical Universities in Rome. It is also linked in a special way to the Athenaeum of Sant'Anselmo and to the Benedictine Order, as is also demonstrated by the fact that since 1983 the school has been based at the Abbey of San Girolamo in Urbe, while the legal and historical headquarters are still at Sant'Apollinare.

On the occasion of this centenary my thoughts go to all those—and the Lord alone knows perfectly who they are—who have in any way cooperated with the activity of what was first the "School of Sacred Music" and later the "Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music": from the successive superiors who guided it, to the distinguished faculty members and the generations of students. Thanksgiving to God, for the many gifts granted, goes hand in hand with gratitude for all that each one of them has given to the Church by cultivating the art of music at the service of divine worship.

This important anniversary is a cause for joy to all who have at heart the dignity of the liturgy, of which sacred song is an integral part.

[1] English translation from the web site of the Holy See <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20110513_musica-sacra_en.html>.

[2] Cf. Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 112

To have a clear grasp of the identity and role of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, it is necessary to remember that Pope St. Pius X founded this Institute eight years after issuing the Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini*, 22 November 1903, with which he brought about a profound reform in the field of sacred music, restoring the great tradition of the Church to counter the influence of profane music, especially light opera. In order to put this magisterial intervention into practice in the universal Church, a study and teaching center was required that would pass on faithfully and competently the guidelines pointed out by the Supreme Pontiff, in accordance with the authentic and glorious tradition that dates back to St. Gregory the Great.

Who or what is the authentic subject of the liturgy? The answer is simple: the Church.

In the span of the past century this Institution therefore assimilated, elaborated, and passed down the doctrinal and pastoral content of Papal Documents and those of the Second Vatican Council Documents on sacred music so that it might illuminate and guide the work of composers, choir masters, liturgists, musicians, and all formation teachers in this field.

I would also like to highlight one fundamental aspect of this which is particularly dear to me: namely, that since the time of St. Pius X to this day the essential continuity of the Magisterium on sacred music, with its natural development, has been found in the liturgy.

The Pontiffs Paul VI and John Paul II in particular wished to reaffirm the aim of sacred music in the light of the conciliar Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: in other words: "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful" (n. 112), as well as the fundamental criteria of tradition; I limit myself to recalling: the sense of prayer, of dignity, and of beauty; full adherence to the texts and to the liturgical gestures; the involvement of the assembly, hence a legitimate adaptation to the local culture while preserving at the same time the universality of the language; the primacy of Gregorian chant as a supreme model of sacred music and the wise use of other modes of expression that are part of the Church's historical and liturgical patrimony, especially, but not only polyphony; the importance of the *schola cantorum*, particularly in cathedral churches. Today too these are important criteria which should be taken into careful consideration.

Sometimes, in fact, these elements that are found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, such as, precisely, the value of the great ecclesial patrimony of sacred music or the universality that is characteristic of Gregorian chant, have been held to express a concept which corresponds with a past that needs to be superseded and set aside because it is supposed to limit the freedom and creativity of the individual and of communities. Yet we must always ask ourselves anew: Who or what is the authentic subject of the liturgy? The answer is simple: the Church. It is not the individual person or group which is celebrating the liturgy, but is first and foremost God's action through the Church which has her own history, her rich tradition and her creativity.

The liturgy, and consequently sacred music, "lives on a correct and constant relationship between healthy *traditio* and *legitima progressio*," keeping constantly in mind the fact that these two concepts—which the Council Fathers clearly underlined—merge since "tradition is a living reality, which therefore includes in itself the principle of development, of progress"[3]

[3] *Address to the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of the Athenaeum of Sant'Anselmo*, 6 May 2011.

All this, Venerable Brother, forms so to speak the "daily bread" of life and work at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music. On the basis of these sound and reliable elements, to which may now be added a century of experience, I encourage you to continue with a fresh impetus and commitment your service in the professional training of students to ensure that they acquire serious and profound competence in the various disciplines of sacred music.

This Pontifical Institute will thus continue to make a valid contribution to the formation in this field of pastors and of lay faithful in the various particular Churches. It will also encourage a satisfactory discernment of the quality of the musical compositions used in liturgical celebrations. For this important objective you may count on my constant concern, accompanied by my special remembrance in prayer, which I entrust to the heavenly intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Cecilia, while, as I wish your centenary celebrations every success, I cordially impart to you, to the President, to the Teachers, to the Staff, and to all the students of the Institute a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 13 May 2011

A Homily for the Ember Saturday in the Octave of Pentecost

[Preached by Msgr. Andrew Wadsworth at a Solemn High Mass in the Church of the Epiphany, Pittsburgh at Colloquium XXI of The Church Music Association of America, June 18, 2011.]

From the text of the introit, and indeed the epistle of this Holy Mass: *Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris* (The love of God is poured forth in our hearts).

Pentecost, as we know, is the culmination of the Easter festival, which, my breviary informs me, ends today after the office of None. The feast of Pentecost and its octave explains to us how the power of the mystery of Jesus, the mystery of Christ's suffering, dying, and rising is communicated and received; communicated by God, and received by us. God's plan of salvation is, shall we say, expressed in summary form in the breath-taking readings of today's Mass.

If a person were to walk in from the street, and one knowing nothing of the faith that we hold, if that person were enlightened by the Holy Spirit to understand what they were witnessing at this Mass, just about the whole truth of the Catholic faith is laid before them. Today's great feature is the distinctive sequence of prophecies, alleluias, and collects of this Ember Day Mass. Our faith is made so much clearer to us; for we hear of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–32); we hear of the harvest which God expects (Lev. 23: 9–11, 15–17, 21); we hear of the possession of the land (Deut. 26:1–11) and the fruitfulness of that land (Lev. 26:3–12); and we hear, finally, of the purification by fire, which is the suffering and the trial through which we must all pass (Dan. 3:47–51).

In today's great epistle (Rom. 5:1–5) we hear that we have, through God's great mercy, access through faith in Christ, to grace. And then, the gospel we've just heard (Luke 4:38–44) tells us how

that grace is put to work, by God, in our hearts, to heal us. In this, Simon's mother-in-law is a picture of the church. This morning at Matins, St. Ambrose in his wonderful homily commenting on the gospel, makes it clear that the fever of Simon's mother-in-law is an expression of the weakness and the vulnerability that we know so well.

He says, "Febris enim nostra, avaritia est: febris nostra, libido est: febris nostra, luxuria est: febris nostra, ambitio est: febris nostra, iracundia est" (Homily by St. Ambrose, Book. iv. on Luke 4). Our fever, the weakness which so easily and obviously besets us, is that avarice or lack of generosity, lust, selfishness or greed, ambition, and anger. These are the things in the human heart which keep us from God and one another. They are impediments to the action of the Holy Spirit and they are very real impediments to God's plan.

What is that plan? The fathers of the church called it nothing less than divinization, the process of expanding the human heart so much that eventually it can receive God himself. Scripture says: "when we see him, we shall be like him" (1 John 3: 2–3). I'm sure I don't only speak for myself when I say that we are all very much a work in process—the process whereby a heart becomes sufficiently generous to receive God himself.

It is principally in the liturgy that we learn the language of heaven, and the song of heaven.

God has given us this great promise which we hear at the heart of this Mass, the song which is on the lips of the church as this Mass begins: the Love of God is being poured forth in our hearts. It points us toward heaven, just as the liturgy does. It points us towards the goal, as it were, to which this procession must move.

Today, in our tradition, is a great day for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in the gift of ordination, the ordinations to the minor orders, and even to the major orders, culminating in the ordination to the priesthood just before the gospel. We can see how, in God's providence, and in his plan, this priestly people which makes up the Catholic Church, should, through the celebration of the sacred liturgy, expand its heart to receive God himself.

We know, do we not, that it is in the liturgy, at its best, that maybe just for a brief moment, the veil is lifted? And we perceive, even in this life, something which is the life of heaven, which breaks through, into our hearts. It is principally in the liturgy that we learn the language of heaven, and the song of heaven.

We are told that the fathers of the church learnt the chant from the angels, and that our singing *altera ad alterum*, antiphonally from side to side, is an imitation of the choirs of angels that sing responding to one another. When we sing, we should be like them, because we shall have become what we sing: *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*. Holy, holy, holy.

COMMENTARY

The Effects of a Hermeneutic of Crisis on the Liturgy

By Fr. Christopher Smith

There has been a lot of talk for the past forty years about the fact that the Catholic Church finds itself in crisis. Various phenomena, such as decreasing Mass attendance, baptisms, and Christian marriages, have led many to posit that there is a profound crisis gripping the faith in our time. Observation of these worrisome phenomena has led many Catholics to ask why we are in such a crisis, and they have come to interpret everything in the church's life under the rubric of crisis.

But there are also two different ways in which the rubric of crisis has been interpreted in our time. The first is the *Reform Hermeneutic of Crisis*. According to this theory, the church is in dire straits because she has refused to engage in a real dialogue with the contemporary world and change her doctrine and practice to be relevant to modern persons. The second is the *Counter-Reform Hermeneutic of Crisis*. This theory posits that the church has sacrificed her doctrine and practice at the altar of relevance to modern man who has denied God. As a result, a church no longer distinguishable from the world has rendered herself meaningless to modern man.

There are other interpretations as well, and these are admittedly gross oversimplifications of two trends in what I call crisis theology. These two very different hermeneutics, however, share a common theological basis. For them, the true church is in the heart of believers who know their way out of the crisis, and the visible, institutional church of today is at variance with that true church. As Catholics, they know that there has to be some kind of relationship between that true church and the visible, institutional church, and for the two to become one again, the crisis can be overcome only by structural reform (or counter-reform) of the church.

There has been a lot of talk for the past forty years about the fact that the Catholic Church finds itself in crisis.

Many of the phenomena that people indicate as being evidence of the crisis in the church are very real. The reform crowd can point to innumerable instances of misuse and abuse of authority by the hierarchy, and to the virtual absence of the church's presence in many spheres of culture, science, and intellectual life. The counter-reform crowd can point to gross deviations in doctrinal orthodoxy and morality as well as widespread disobedience throughout the church.

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But is the church really in crisis? Can structural reforms help the church out of the crisis? First of all, I would like to affirm the fact that both camps have accurately observed that many people in the church have done things which are not in consonance with the message of the church, and that the scandal caused by these errors has caused many to question or abandon the practice of the faith. But there are deeper theological and philosophical considerations we can make about the church in crisis.

The hermeneutic of crisis is not unrelated to a very real phenomenon in contemporary philosophy. According to certain currents in philosophy, the nature of being is change. There is no real essence or nature to anything. The church, then, cannot be anything other than a mutable, essentially human thing. Appeals to unchanging doctrinal or moral norms are meaningless, because they do not reflect the truth that there is no objective truth. Human activity, inside or outside of the church, is a constant process of actions and reactions making and unmaking reality in a creative and destructive procession without an end. Crisis, then, or chaos, is what life is all about. For the church to be in crisis, then, is a sign of inner vitality; for it to be always questioning and reinventing itself is a the fundamental mark of its own authenticity.

How does this understanding of crisis affect the liturgy?

This current of philosophy is rejected by the counter-reform school, as being inconsistent with their vision of reality in which there is objective truth, which can be known by man by reason and the living authority of the church. But even as they reject the tenets of this current, counter-reform partisans often grant the basic premise, that the church is, like all of modern society, in crisis. And so they too view every phenomenon in the church under the rubric of crisis.

How does this understanding of crisis affect the liturgy? For the reform school, the liturgy, if it is to be an authentic expression of man's religious sentiment, must be creative, always changing, and acting and reacting. Liturgical crisis is actually desirable. For the church to find its way out of becoming irrelevant to modern persons, the crisis must be revealed, produced, or even engineered. If people are not going to church, we must change the life of the church so that they will come. If notions of hierarchy, immutable dogma, moral norms, and liturgical rites detract from the fundamental evolutionary process of humanity in perpetual crisis, they must be challenged, destroyed, and their memory annihilated.

For the counter-reform school, the phenomena of the crisis have their origin in a cause: the liturgical reform as the incarnation in the life of the church of a crisis of faith. Liturgical crisis is the effect and the cause of crisis in the church's life. If people are not going to church, we must then return to a situation before the crisis. If notions of hierarchy, immutable dogma, moral norms, and liturgical rites are challenged by man, lost as he is in crisis and chaos, the church must impose all those notions, as found before the crisis, in whatever way possible.

Both schools propose structural reform as a way out of what seems to be the lessening of Catholic practice in our age. The liturgy, because it is the way in which most Catholics experience and practice that faith, must correspondingly be altered, either by changing it radically to look unlike anything ever seen before, or by imposing it as experienced by previous generations and excising what has come during the crisis.

But is the church really in crisis? We raised that question before. Many optimists have continued to tell us that there is a new springtime in the church, that, contrary indications aside, the church is very much alive and renewing herself. Yet the hermeneutic of optimism cannot, or does not wish, to explain the phenomena accurately observed by both the reform and counter-reform schools. So how are we to think of these numerous indications that Catholic life in many parts of the world seem to be terribly fractured and fractious?

Sound Catholic theology has always rejected the idea of change as the nature of reality. From this point of view, there is no constant existential crisis in which man or the church finds itself. But, there is another sense in which, yes, the church can be said to be in crisis. From the moment that the church was born from the side of Christ on the cross, until the Second Coming of Christ, the church is, has been, and will be in crisis and scandal.

The crisis is that those who have been baptized into Christ, and hence are the church, are always short of their full potential as Christians. There is always in the church a tension between the contingency of the new and the fulfillment of the not yet. This is why the church does not have as her fundamental orientation this world, the present. She has her eyes firmly fixed on the East, whence will come the Rising Son; hers is a fundamentally eschatological orientation, not towards a future that will come, but to an eternity which irrupts into the daily and which will one day be our complete reality. The scandal is that we often do not use the gift of free will to choose eternity over the present in every moment of this earthly life. And so crisis and scandal are a part of the church's life in this world because they are inseparable from our own individual human lives until the consummation of all things in Christ at the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.

Sound Catholic theology has always rejected the idea of change as the nature of reality.

The crisis and scandal, which mark life in the church in this present world, point to the fact that no human structural reform of the church's life can preclude the ongoing immersion of the individual Christian in crisis and scandal. The way out of the crisis and scandal, therefore, cannot be had by such human attempts at changing the way people pray or believe.

The Second Vatican Council will always be known as the Council of the Church. In so many ways, the council provided a rich theology of the church. It clarified the sacramental and spiritual as well as the visible and institutional nature of the church. It gave a missionary mandate to the universal, common priesthood of the baptized and gave an indication of how that mandate could be lived in communion with the ministerial priesthood within the church. There has been a lot of talk about the church.

Unfortunately, however, all of this talk about the church has eclipsed an even greater truth of the faith. Jesus Christ. Many people have come to feel that, to be faithful to Jesus Christ, they must challenge or contradict the church. The church is no longer the Mystical Body of Christ lived as a communion of believers, but a people who can change their message to be in accord with what they think Jesus wants of it. The words of Alfred Loisy, the modernist, "Jesus came to preach the Kingdom and it is the Church that has come," have convinced reform and counter-reform alike that the true church must regain its visibility by imposing structural change.

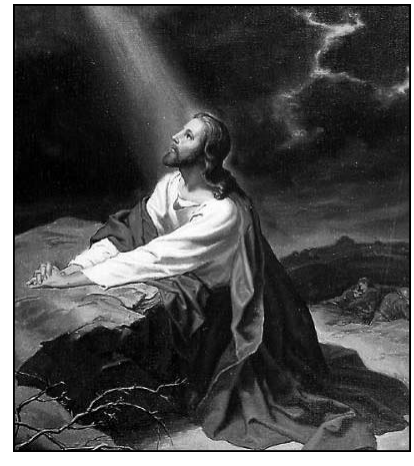
Even as this modernist dictum has seeped into the deepest roots of Christian civilization, many in the church have lost sight of what I feel is the greatest achievement of Vatican II: the solemn recognition of the universal call to holiness.

As long as Christians are focused on the church, the crisis in the church, the scandals in the church, and how to change the church, they lose sight of Jesus Christ. True reform, or counter-reform, or renewal, or restoration, or whatever you want to call it, can never come from us. It has to come from a life of holiness, the life of grace of God lived in us. Each individual baptized Christian's free response to conform his life to Jesus Christ, a life lived in communion with the church which is true where it is visible and institutional, is the way in which the tension of the already and not yet of the church's life is resolved.

This call to holiness is more than just the minimal observance of moral norms, for Jesus Christ is more than just a moral exemplar. The life of holiness involves a complete self-giving to God and to one's fellow man. And such a life of holiness is not dependent on structural reform of the church. It is a grace which comes from God, and, as such, it ushers in the Kingdom of God inasmuch as every single soul is conformed to Jesus Christ.

True reform can never come from us. It has to come from a life of holiness.

The liturgy, which is the reflection of heaven on earth, in which the fruits of the redemption are received in sacramental form, cannot be seen from the point of view of crisis and rupture. It cannot be manipulated and changed as a mere human construct on the way to producing an ideal church for an ideal human person and society. The liturgy must be humbly accepted for what it is, and celebrated by each member of the church according to his own role in it, for the purpose of conforming his life, and thus the church's, ever closer to that of Jesus Christ. We have no need to invoke a hermeneutic of crisis and seek ways out of the crisis to explain the varying phenomenon of the way our contemporaries practice the faith. We do have need of becoming holy as our Father in heaven is holy. ✠



The Idea of a National Mass Setting

By Jeffrey Tucker

The Catholic parish people know best is their own. It's always complicated: musicians burrowed into certain time slots, demographic allocations that are never announced but everyone understands, compromises made for big players in parish life, accommodations granted for financial or political reasons. It takes time to get the lay of the land, and change always happens slowly.

But how much do we really know about national trends and the model parish experience? Sometimes people do find themselves traveling on Sunday and experience other parishes. Mostly, people tend to go to places attended by friends or famous local parishes that fit with their own view of what constitutes good Catholic liturgy.

The trouble with this approach is that we do not tend go to places that fall outside our comfort zone, and hence a "praise musician" is not likely to attend an extraordinary form Mass where the people loudly sing *Regina Caeli* as the recessional, and I'm not likely to find myself in a college ministry liturgy that features a locally famous rock band. The upshot is that our perception of what constitutes the convention in American Catholic liturgy is unavoidably biased by our experience.

Most of us do assume that the Catholic experience considered on a national level is profoundly heterogeneous. There are probably good aspects to that but there are limits. If it is not possible for Catholics to attend a random parish and recognize the sound and feel of at least the ordinary chants of the Mass, and those ordinary settings that are sung have nothing to do with the sensibility that is historically embedded in the ritual itself, there is a serious problem.

There should not be as many experiences of the Roman Rite as there are pastors and parishes.

There is plenty of evidence that this is the case, and, truly, there is something strangely uncatholic about this reality. We should be able to travel and go into most any parish and have some sense that we are home away from home. There should be some familiarity. There should not be as many experiences of the Roman Rite as there are pastors and parishes. There really does need to be some standard, commonly sung setting of the Mass ordinary that people can point to with some sense of common experience.

Five years ago, if someone had suggested that the bishops make it a priority to have some standard national setting, and that this setting should necessarily be English chant, I would have thought: give it up. It will never happen. There is no means to impose such a thing. People will resent it and

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refuse. In any case, music doesn't work this way. It has to come from the heart, not from some bureaucracy above. The idea of a unified national Mass setting? Those worms long ago crawled away from the can.

Well, I guess I lack imagination because it turns out that this is precisely what is happening, and the means by which it is happening is absolutely fascinating. The new chants for the ordinary form of Mass are embedded in the new missal that is being published for required use starting on the First Sunday of Advent this year.

In addition to that, the bishops and the International Commission on English in the Liturgy are requiring of publishers that they print the full Mass setting from the missal in all pew liturgical aids. And there has been an effort made to ensure that these chants are printed exactly as they appear in the missal, not changed or distorted by, for example, contorting them into 6/8 meter, or adding bar lines, or changing the text. Not even the punctuation can change. This rule has been applied uniformly with no exceptions.

Music has to come from the heart, not from some bureaucracy above.

(In any case, the text does not lend itself to being crammed into a metrical model. The attempt can even create absurdities.)

Now, in a draft of one GIA publication I saw, these chants were labeled as ICEL chants, which is highly unfortunate. I hope that by the time these are printed, the chants will be labeled as missal chants. In any case, we can be fairly certain that the entire body of chants for the people as they appear in the missal—which itself contains more music than any missal printed in modern times—will also be in the pew books that are printed for Mass.

This is a dramatic change and a great cause for hope. For example, I'm unaware of any publisher that reprints the chants in the current, lame-duck missal. We actually use them in my own parish (when we are not singing Latin) but I've been told that we might be one of the only parishes in the country that does this.

This is for a reason: the missal pertains to the clergy. The choir feels free to ignore it, and so do the people. By requiring that the chants be printed for the choir and people, this change will take a gigantic leap toward unifying liturgical action—plus it provides the energy that is necessary to actually achieve what seems otherwise unachievable: a national Mass setting.

In addition, ICEL has taken the wonderful step of actually publishing all the music for the missal on its website, in easy downloads for sharing and spreading. This is strategically brilliant, and represents a big shift from the ways of the past. I'm not entirely sure who was responsible for this decision, but the choice is progressive and thrilling. Openness and liberality in the distribution of music is the first step toward making a real difference.

Now, among my friends, I hear the objection that these chants are not in Latin, so this would suggest that English has become standard in the ordinary form. I would just respond: look at the reality at it exists today and consider that English chant takes us a long way toward where we need to go. We have forty years of experience to know that the leap from praise music to Latin chant is a leap too large for most parishes—and how much more evidence do we need? Singing English chant is by itself a gigantic improvement, and it points the way toward the ideal.

Another objection is that the imposition of a national setting might actually pose a danger to those parishes that are current singing music from the Gregorian Kyriale. It is not an improvement but rather a regressive step to stop singing Gloria VIII or XV, or Credo I or III, and start singing English chant from the new missal. I would certainly agree with this point, but we have to ask: under what circumstances would this scenario actually apply?

The question is: how many ordinary form parishes routinely use Latin chant at Mass? What would your guess be? Now, I might have thought that it would be fifteen to twenty percent of parishes. I put the question to a church official in the English-speaking world who would be very much in the know on this issue. And do you know what he said? He said that only one percent were doing this. Again, one percent!

What's more, among those parishes where Latin chant is sung year round, it often happens in only one Mass of five or six on Sunday and usually in an outlying Mass time, like the vigil Mass or a very early Sunday morning Mass. The idea here is to draw in (and get rid of) those dozen or so people in the parish who are otherwise confrontational about the need for solemn liturgy. The Latin chant in these parishes is thrown as a fish into the mouths of these dolphins so that they will swim away.

This is a time to realize that the fate of all of us as Catholics is at stake.

The tragedy is that millions and millions of people are being denied the spiritual experience of praying through the plainsong of the church's heritage—music that has stood the test of time and is organic to the liturgy itself. This has gone on for forty years—and the carnage that has resulted is essentially unspeakable.

There is a tendency of Catholics to find their niche and stick with it, not looking outside the window to see what is going on elsewhere and then getting into the habit of mind that says "I really don't care about what others are doing, so long as I'm taken care of." This attitude is as true of people who prefer rock at Mass as it is of those who demand only Latin chant. This is a time to realize that the fate of all of us as Catholics is at stake. We need to take the necessary steps to make this happen—and this might even involve some degree of personal sacrifice for the greater good.

It is liturgically and even morally obligatory that something be done to fix the problem of deep disunity in the Catholic musical world. The approach being taken by the bishops and ICEL is wholly defensible for this reason. It is even heroic. This could be the moment when history turns and the Roman Rite as experienced by the majority of Catholics starts being true to itself. Do what you can to make this happen. This is the moment, and we are all being called to do make a difference.

A Primer on the Gradual

By Jeffrey Tucker

Lots of people have questions about sacred music that they are afraid to ask. A small fraction of these questions arrive in my in box, and I'm always happy about this. Usually they involve terminology. It's always the case that people involved in a sector of life develop their own vocabulary. I can recall recently talking to a person in the candy-packaging industry and it was dazzling how many specialized terms he could throw out there in the course of a few minutes.

And so it is in sacred music. The trouble is that this sector has been small and specialized for half a century, whereas the vocabulary really ought to be a common feature of Catholic life. I can understand this from an individual point of view. It wasn't too long ago that the specialized language of Catholic music and liturgy was completely new to me, and of course I still have vast amounts to learn.

I can recall, for example, being completely confused by the term gradual. What is it and why am I having such a hard time figuring it out? Sure enough, I received an email today asking all the same questions I once had. So let me try to straighten this out. And, please, I welcome any correction to this entry.

The term *graduale* is Latin. In English it is *gradual.* A major source of confusion is that it is used in two senses. One use refers to the music book of the Roman Rite, the Roman Gradual or Graduale Romanum. Another use refers to a special kind of chant after which the book itself is named.

People have questions about sacred music that they are afraid to ask.

So this usage problem is already confusing, since we are used to one word meaning one thing. Hence, "sing the gradual from the gradual" is a sentence that is likely to introduce no end of confusion. But this is the way it is: the gradual is one of the chants in the gradual. And the reason for the naming of the book in this way is that the gradual is the oldest and most elaborate and most beautiful of all the Gregorian chants. It is the most exalted chant in the book.

The gradual is the chant between the readings. Its primary text is the psalms. These chants have been with us since the earliest centuries. They were being formed and standardized in the period in which the canon of the Bible itself was being codified.

The original of the term comes from its English meaning of "steps," namely the steps leading to the ambo. This is the place from which the gradual was sung. Its liturgical function, scholars tell us, was not about processing from here to there. It was not to accompany an action as such. Its function

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was purely to provide a time of reflection between the readings. It is long. It has a verse that can require a great deal of singing skill. It is the most musically engaging and elaborate of all the chants assigned to the schola. Its magnificence comes from its music, which itself forms the infrastructure of all chant (and, in turn, the whole corpus of musical development of Western civilization ever since).

Now we come to a trickier problem, namely, where is the gradual today? In the ordinary form of Mass (the form experienced by probably more than ninety-five percent of Catholics today), there is nothing called the gradual in the missal or the missalettes. The gradual chant survives only in the book the Graduale Romanum. The all-but universal practice is to replace the gradual with the responsorial psalm.

Where is the gradual today?

This replacement occurred at the promulgation of the new Mass in 1969/70. The responsorial psalm is not required. The General Instruction also permits the singing of the gradual—and from the point of view of tradition and the "hermeneutic of continuity," such a practice would be clearly superior. It is hardly ever done however.

When the responsorial psalm was introduced, it was as a text-only change. Whereas the gradual had a long and amazing musical history, the responsorial psalm was just a sentence and it was left to composers and publishers to set it to music.

The result is that it might be the most musically unstable portion of Mass. (As with the case of many changes in this period, one is led again led to ask: What were they thinking?) The prevailing belief was that the people have to be able instantly to sing it back (in the name of participation), leading composers and publishers to shove the text into metrical musical settings with a popular feel.

Even if it was no one's particular intention, the results are astounding to consider. What was once the most musically rooted and glorious portion of Mass, the very Psalms of David that were the basis of the song of all early Christians, became the least musically impressive, and often the most embarrassing, part of Mass.

To be sure, it is not the case that the gradual was sung in its proper form at every Mass before 1969. At Low Masses, it was spoken. At High Masses, it was usually sung to a psalm tone in a hurried way, defeating the point of the form and function of the chant. But this less-than-ideal approach became codified with the syllabic and purely didactic approach of the responsorial psalm. The idea of providing a long moment of transcendent sound for prayerful reflection is gone. The psalm has become just another noisy thing that happens somewhere between coming and going.

To be sure, it does not have to be this way. Chabanel Psalms started up three years ago and changed many aspects of the conventional practice. These psalms are beautiful and attempt to come closer toward the idea of the older, more traditional model. In my own parish, we sing the responsorial psalm with settings by Arlene Oost-Zinner. The CMAA hopes to put these out as a single volume with all three years for choirs to have in the choir room or loft.

This approach is not an end in itself. We really need to push toward an environment that is more hospitable toward singing the authentic gradual chant. From the point of view of the people at Mass, this would be a welcome relief, a time when they are not being hectored to sing or listening to some instruction or having prayers interrupted by a mandate to sing a seven-second ditty. Instead, they could have a few minutes of peace, actual time for deep prayer. Imagine that!

Vatican liturgical events have taken some steps toward re-introducing the gradual, and this is a much-welcome change. As we look to the future, where are we headed? The gradual isn't going anywhere fast; neither, for that matter is the book the Graduale Romanum; but there is some progress, and it remains an ideal, both in the documents and in the aesthetics of the liturgy. The Psalms of David sung in their most masterful form will return in all their glory, maybe not soon, but at some point. Music of this type transcends the preferences and experiments of a single generation.

A Missal for the Choir

By Jeffrey Tucker

Many commentators have noted how the Roman Rite has become balkanized in a single town, with different understandings prevailing at each parish. It is even true within single parishes, where we find everything from a Gregorian chant Mass to a rock-band Mass, each marketed to a separate demographic.

There is an even stranger problem that affects every single Mass, one that has little precedent in the history of the ritual. The problem is that the printed materials for the celebrant are hardly ever seen by the choir. The choir's materials are hardly ever seen by the celebrant. The people in the pews have a different set, and there is yet another set for readers who handle the prayers of the faithful. The patchwork comes together in the end, more or less, but there are important pieces missed along the way.

A good example comes in Holy Week this year. The sacramentary contains many chants that the choir know nothing about. Missalettes and planning guides do not have them. They are there for the priest but the priest is not designated to sing them. As a result, they do not get sung at all. Nor is the director of music in a position to assist the celebrant with his chants. Choir leaders figure that all they need to know is in their planning guide and the missalette. But when you actually compare the two resources, you get a picture of a different ritual.

I would venture a guess that most people involved in a conventional parish music program have never opened a sacramentary.

In fact, I would venture a guess that most people involved in a conventional parish music program have never opened a sacramentary, much less follow what is going on in there week to week.

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They don't have to. Nor do most priests bother to look at the planning guides that the choir uses to provide music for the liturgy. They are pretty much in the dark as to why the choir sings what it sings. The problem is further complicated by the differences that are embedded in the sacramentary versus the gradual itself.

It is helpful to contrast this with the old Mass. The Roman Missal (there is no separate lectionary) contains all the words said at Mass. The Roman Gradual has the same words insofar as they are to be sung. The *Liber Usualis* is a useful compendium that allows the singers to see exactly what is being done. The customized versions for the celebrant add the detailed rubrics that pertained to the celebrant but otherwise, laypeople can use the Liber or any handheld missal that's the same except that it adds notes that pertain to the laity.

In other words, everyone is on the same page.

I've been very critical of the current sacramentary but in the balance, it is a better musical resource for ritual music than the missalettes. The trouble is that hardly anyone other than the priest really sees this music. A knowledgeable choir director once told me that my own parish is the only one he has ever heard of that actually used the music in the sacramentary for ritual music for the congregation. It is not great, but it is good, and much better than you find elsewhere.

Will this strange situation change with the new translation? Certainly the bishops and ICEL are hoping for a change. This is why they are requiring that the chants from the missal itself be printed in all musical resources in the pew. And the chants are not to be re-rendered in a new rhythm but printed exactly as they appear in the missal itself.

This is a huge step. The people, the priest, and the people will have all the same basic music for the Mass. This will tie together a major loose end at currently exists in the liturgical structure.

Even so, there are limits to the mandate. The missal will contain many chants that are not likely to be printed in the pew editions or the choir editions. The danger is that they will go unsung and unknown.

Now to the action item. Pastors would do well to purchase an additional missal just for the loft or the choir room. It should be there on a stand for easy access. It should be maintained so that the ribbons mark the day. Choir directors and organists should be encouraged to look at the liturgical text every day or every week so that they will know what is coming and what the options are.

Choir directors should be encouraged to look critically at the material from the major publishers to make sure that their resources are not leaving out important information or critical music.

It will also help if the choir director can see what the priest sees, and thereby be in a position to encourage singing from the sanctuary. The director can point out to the pastor that such and such passage can be beautiful when sung, and then demonstrate how easy it is. This will help break down the communication barriers that currently exist.

This one simple step will take us a long way to re-integrating the loft and the sanctuary, which is essential to putting the Roman ritual back together again.

Many companies are printing new missals. The most elaborate versions can cost up to five hundred dollars but there are smaller versions with less elaborate bindings that are more affordable. This should be part of the parish budget. If it is not, someone in the parish should volunteer to pay the bill to make this happen.

This may seem like an unlikely change to advance the reform of the reform, but the small step of providing and using a new Roman Missal in the choir room can do a great deal of good.

The Singers' Role

By Mary Jane Ballou

An old railroad warning slogan "STOP LOOK and LISTEN" can be applied with benefit to the work of singers and their directors. In the first part of this article I looked at the director's role. Now it's time for the singers.

I. STOP!

When you arrive to work with your choir, leave everything else behind. If you're coming for rehearsal, it is difficult to forget about work, the hurried supper, a child's announcement that a major project is due tomorrow morning and needs exactly three and a half yards of red curtain material, and thefact that the car made a suspicious noise when you pulled into the church parking lot. Nonetheless, that is your first "stop." Singers need to stop being somewhere else mentally. At least they need to make a conscious effort to be fully present.

The biggest obstacle to this "presence" is in your pocket or purse: your cell phone, smart phone, mobile, or whatever you choose to call it. Everyone appreciates the need of parents, doctors on call, and caregivers of elderly or ailing family members to be accessible in case of emergency. However, these calls during rehearsal are rare. Even set on "vibrate," these devices hum, buzz, and beep. Who can resist looking?

What about the impulse for a quick text or check of the e-mail while the director is talking to another section? I am as guilty as any. How do singers STOP? Although it may seem unrealistic, I suggest the following possibility. At rehearsals, put the phones on the other side of the room unless you fall into one of those privileged categories listed above. (This advice applies to directors as well.) At Mass, your cell phone should be shut all the way off.

While a singer can turn off his or her phone, turning off the singers sitting next to you is more challenging. Singers are friends as well as seatmates. One suggestion is for directors to identify a specific time in the rehearsal for everyone to catch up with each other. For the focused singer, a polite refusal to discuss anything other than the music at hand is an option. When you're talking to your neighbor, you can miss an announcement of the next piece to be sung, an upcoming schedule change, or advice directed to another part that you might find useful yourself. Stop talking and your director won't have to repeat things several times.

II. LOOK

Many singers only look at the measure they're singing. Changes in key signature and meter, as well as repeats, come as a complete surprise. Don't be that singer. When a new piece of music is distributed, keep one ear cocked for instructions from the director, while you scan the music for potential pitfalls. Know what's in your path.

Trying to watch the director and the score simultaneously makes many singers long for an extra pair of eyes. The key to success is the ability to "grab" a couple of measures with your eyes, keep singing, and get the director in your sights as well. It's a given that you watch at the beginning of the piece and at the end for any ritard and the final cut off. How about checking in with the director along the way?

This is less daunting than it appears because you probably know a great deal of your regular repertoire quite well and continue staring at the music out of habit rather than necessity. Take the personal challenge to trust yourself on that Sanctus you sing throughout Ordinary Time (or the Sundays after Pentecost). I'll bet you've already memorized it—and now you can really pray it while you sing!

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When the director is speaking, offering general advice or updates, look at him (or her). This is not the moment to paw through your folder or retie your shoe laces. Your focused attention will be greatly appreciated. Looking at a speaker enhances your comprehension of the message being delivered because we are multisensory creatures.

Here's a real challenge that lies outside rehearsals. Look for new members for your choir. A choir can become a "closed" club. Not that its members are deliberately unwelcoming; there just doesn't seem to be a place for new singers. While the annual "ministry fair" may draw some attention to the choir, it is the personal invitation of singers and the director that will be the most effective. Even if the person you invite doesn't join, someone else might overhear that invitation and show up on Wednesday night.

When new singers come, look for ways to make them welcome. Say hello, introduce yourself, and offer them a seat. While this may sound trite, I have seen choir members ignore newcomers, not out of malice, but simply because the old-timers are busy chatting among themselves. After a few rehearsals, the new singer drops out and everyone wonders why. Remember when you were new and take the time to make the newbies feel at home. Both you and they are the future of your choir.

III. LISTEN

Hearing is something that we do naturally; listening is an art. I am fully convinced that at least eighty percent of successful singing depends on careful listening. As a singer of sacred music, you need to listen to your director, to the voices that surround you, and to your own voice.

When your director models a phrase, plays or sings a line with which your part has been struggling, listen in silence. Do not hum under your breath. It will distract your fellow singers. When it is time to listen, listen; when it is time to sing, then you sing. If there is a problem in your section, ask for the director's assistance, and then listen to the answer. An ensemble with multiple, self-appointed "mini-directors" will take much longer to master a piece.

Be aware of the voices on either side of you. A good blend makes a good chorus and in the case of Gregorian chant, it is essential. Listen to those around you and add just the right amount of your voice. If you're hearing more of your voice than those on either side, "dial it down."

Obviously if you find yourself sitting next to Fred Flat-Note or Susie Sharp, there's a problem. Again, this is a problem for the director to handle. As an individual singer, you can ask for help and suggest that there seems to be a problem with intonation. The only voice you can control is your own. Do NOT attempt to "sing" the voice next to you onto the correct pitch. The result will only be a "howling match."

CONCLUSION

I have said nothing in the preceding paragraphs that an experienced singer has not heard many times before. However, I would call your attention to another "Stop, Look, and Listen" we often overlook in our focus on tuning, diction, dynamics, and ensemble.

It is the words. STOP and think about them before you make a sound. Before there was the melody, there was the text.

Give the words a LOOK. Are the phrases short and punchy? Are there metaphors? Images? Is it biblical in origin or a later composition?

Then LISTEN to the text. This listening should be wholehearted. In all sacred music, and most particularly in chant, the role of melody is to give a voice to the text. As St. Benedict said about the master's instructions in the prologue to his rule, "attend to them with the ear of your heart."

Whether you are singing the Sanctus with the six-winged seraphim in the book of Isaiah, or sharing Israel's laments and hopes in the psalms, listen first with your heart and mind. Then, and only then, add your voice to the song.

Challenging the Liturgical Status Quo

By Fr. Christopher Smith

For the last year, I have been doing my doctoral research on the French Jesuit Henri De Lubac (1896–1991). This mild-mannered man who played a heroic part in the resistance to the Nazis in France was catapulted to a dubious fame in 1946 when he published a little book called *Surnaturel*.

The book was ostensibly little more than an historical survey about the concept of the supernatural in Catholic theology, but behind it was a more ambitious project. De Lubac, together with some other French and German theologians, was convinced that the evil of secularization had arisen in part because of a decadent interpretation of theology that had gripped the church ever since St. Thomas Aquinas. For them, the only way to shake the church out of its fortress mentality and allow her to engage with the world was by renewing theology to re-establish contact between contemporary thought and the early fathers of the church.

When De Lubac charged that the noted commentator Tommaso di Vio, better known as Cajetan (1469–1534), had falsified St. Thomas's teaching on the supernatural, the theologians of the day reacted bitterly. For several years, the debate raged in French theological magazines. De Lubac was removed from his teaching post in Lyon. Then, Pope Blessed John XXIII was elected pope and convoked the Second Vatican Council. This theologian was asked to be a consultor to the council, and his name was inscribed among the theological *glitterati* who comprised a school that came to be known as the *nouvelle theologie*. In the wake of the council, De Lubac, who had been known before it as a dangerous radical, was just as easily dismissed as a reactionary throwback. De Lubac had always maintained that the answer to the question, "How is God related to human nature?" was crucial, not only for theology, but for every aspect of the church's life. Within a decade after the council, theologians were speaking of the twilight of the supernatural as if it were a theological category which had passed into the land of fairy tales, along with limbo and the doctrine that outside the church there is no salvation.

Henri-Marie de Lubac 1896□1991

De Lubac, to his credit, made some valid criticisms about the theology of the supernatural as had come to be explained in his time. He also rejected in great part the entire neo-scholastic system in which theology had been taught for centuries, but did not foresee that his name would be invoked for every kind of trend from liberation theology to Radical Orthodoxy, whose tenets he hardly would have supported. Yet his critique of the theology of the supernatural was accepted *prima facie* for generations, as it turns out, rather uncritically.

De Lubac's rejection of the post-Tridentine baroque tradition of commentary was part of a fascinating phenomenon in mid-twentieth century theology. Throughout Catholic academia, there was the growing belief that there was something not quite right with the Council of Trent and what came after it. Theologians looked at the often dry and boring manuals of theology of the time and compared them

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with the vivacity of patristic and early medieval authors, and found the manuals wanting. These academics accurately foresaw the wind of secularism.

What they did not see was the whirlwind of the disintegration of a unitary method of Catholic theology. There had always been pluralism in Catholic theology. Every major university had chairs in Dominican, Franciscan, Jesuit, Thomistic, and nominalist theologies. But the critique that men of the church like De Lubac made of the hegemony of neo-Thomism in their time actually gave a tool for others to replace legitimate theological pluralism with doctrinal disorder and chaos.

In matters liturgical, there was also the growing feeling that what happened to the liturgy at Trent and afterwards was somehow not quite right. Eminent liturgical thinkers like Louis Bouyer decried what they saw to be the theatricality of a baroque liturgy removed from the active participation of the people. They looked backwards to the liturgical experience of the primitive church as having some kind of normative status even as it was admittedly shrouded in mystery.

Pope Pius XII, who was very much in favor of theological progress and research, did see the dangers of such an approach. His encyclicals, *Humani generis* and *Mediator Dei*, sought to put thinkers on the alert that such thinking was really anachronistic, and could actually harbor dangers for the integrity of the faith. The exuberant optimism of the conciliar period, however, confident in its own scientific claims, ignored this warning, and continued to propose that the only way forward, for theology as for liturgy, was to go backwards into a better time and forwards into an even better time. What had to be done was not only challenge, but eliminate, the status quo. In doing so, a new church could be sung into being which would be more authentically Catholic.

The assumption that the liturgy was broken and needed to be fixed began well before Vatican II.

The chief problem with this mindset is not the often sincere intentions for ecclesiastical renewal which accompanied it. This problem is expressed in two postulates. The first is that there existed in the past some point of reference in which the liturgy, theology, and church life was pure, was what should be. This is incorrect, because the church is never pure and what should be will only be in heaven. The second, is that placing such a vision in dialogue with contemporary trends will renew the church. This is also incorrect, because it assumes that such a dialogue and a renewal is always and everywhere possible.

After the Second Vatican Council, these two errors accompanied critiques of liturgy, theology, and church life from left, right, and center. Catholicism in the latter half of the twentieth century had imbibed the myth that there was out there a perfect way to do theology, make liturgy, and be the church. If we read the memoirs of Annibale Bugnini and Cardinal Antonelli, both deeply involved in the liturgical reform and also divided by it, we can see that these two men in different ways took these postulates to be true, differing only in the details.

The assumption that the liturgy was broken and needed to be fixed, that theology was broken and needed to be fixed, that the church was broken and needed to be fixed, began well before Vatican II and has continued unabated ever since. People's assumptions of how all of this came to be broken, and what must be done to fix it, have divided Catholics ever since.

The neo-Thomists who reacted to De Lubac and others associated with the *nouvelle theologie* often refused to entertain legitimate points of their criticism because it was not expressed in a form they

recognized. Likewise, those who felt themselves attacked rejected everything dear to their attackers because they were being attacked. A similar thing is happening with the liturgy. Many self-appointed proponents of what is now known as the extraordinary form of the liturgy defend one particular form of liturgy without always engaging concerns about the way in which liturgy is celebrated and intended to be. (One thinks of the rather odd situation of those who defend the 1962 Missal and the 1955 Holy Week reforms without granting that they were as much the brainchild of Bugnini as the 1970 Missal). Likewise, liturgical revolutionaries have successfully poisoned the minds of many an otherwise faithful Catholic against liturgical forms of previous and current times because they do not conform to standards which they themselves set and which often have little to do with the liturgy at all.

In the past ten years, some younger theologians who were born after the debate over De Lubac's *Surnaturel* and for whom the mid-century theological debates are about as personally relevant as those at Nicea I, have begun to ask themselves: "What was the fuss all about anyway?" In doing so, they have pointed out that De Lubac, even as he rightly pointed out certain aspects of the supernatural problem that had been obfuscated and hoped for a renewal of theology, still created more problems than he solved with his answer. These theologians do not accept De Lubac's critique as unassailable and are realizing that the wholesale rejection of the baroque tradition of commentary was a mistake. They do not seek to return to a pre-St. Thomas, pre-Cajetan, or a pre-De Lubac position. They do seek to renew theology by questioning what had become universally accepted, namely that the baroque theology was bunk.

Liturgy is experiencing something similar. A younger generation, which does not have the baggage of the experience of Vatican II, are questioning the fundamental assumption that the Tridentine liturgy was bunk and the liturgical reform was good. They do not seek to return to a pre-Trent, or pre-Vatican II position. They do seek to recover a celebration of the liturgy in which there need not be temporally chauvinistic dividing lines.

So what does this mean for the future of the liturgy? There will continue to be those who argue that there will be renewal in the church only when we go back (or forward) to a certain liturgical text, or time period, or *modus celebrandi*. The temporal chauvinist is always tempted by time: to be progressive or conservative, to go backwards or to go forwards. But there are also those within the church who argue that in the church's life, whether it be at the altar in the liturgy or in the classroom in theology, there is no time, there is no progress or regress, backwards or forwards. There is only the extent to which our prayer and our work are in fidelity to Christ and the timeless revelation of his truth for us. Authentic Catholicism is not within the realm of how we get theology, liturgy, or the church right. Authentic Catholicism is right because it is encounter with the fullness of Truth celebrated in Beauty.

In this optic, the most important question is not to decide for ourselves how to worship: what words to say in what language (hieratic or everday English, Latin, or vernacular), what rite to celebrate (Tridentine or Byzantine, or Amchurch), or what music to accompany the narrative of our lives of faith (chant, Lifeteen, or Viennese orchestral masses). When we realize that Catholic worship is the self-oblation of Christ to his Father through the Holy Spirit for the redemption of the world, the fruits of which we receive in Holy Communion and which constitute the church herself, and give her a theological and evangelical mission, then those questions will work themselves out.

We are right to challenge the liturgical and theological status quo. But we are wrong to do so if we think that by doing so, we can foist upon the church our own pet-project vision of how things should be. We should always challenge ourselves as to how we enter into the Mystery of Salvation, of how our celebration of the Paschal Mystery is not bound to criticism, but to glory.

LAST WORD

Charity and Prudence

By Kurt Poterack

> Interviewer: "So why doesn't the Catholic Church go ahead and start ordaining women to the priesthood if the case for women's ordination is as obvious as you say it is?"
>
> Prominent Catholic: "Well, Bob, you see, the Catholic Church is a universal church—world-wide, in fact, and the pope has to take into account the sensibilities of all sorts of different people—and different cultures. You know, women are still seen as chattel in some places. So, the Holy Father has to move slowly and, like a good parent, not unnecessarily scandalize some of the weaker brethren. So it is a matter of charity and prudence.
>
> But make no mistake, the ordination of women to the priesthood is inevitable."

Or so went a radio interview which I remember hearing circa 1975! Was the "prominent Catholic" (who shall remain nameless) being condescending? I seem to remember it that way, but no one can know for sure. It was 1975, after all, and quite a few things seemed inevitable and sensible then to many people—including Catholics of the era. My memory could be faulty (the dialogue above is only approximate and not verbatim) and it is very possible that the interviewee was simply being sincere about what he truly, but mistakenly, thought was the case. It was a good strategy, even though mistakenly attributed to then Pope Paul VI, for a matter that was thought to be of great importance—but not life-threatening.

Again, let me clarify. This man's opinion about women's ordination was wrong. However, the strategy which he mistakenly thought the pope was employing . . . was that wrong?

The strategy . . . was that wrong?

Think about it. If a person is crossing the street and about to be hit by a car, you may (if possible) rush at them and tackle them, thrusting them out of the way of the car—thus, saving a life which was in immediate danger. Here, indeed, is a life-threatening situation that does require immediate action, so, it would be permissible to engage in what would be considered in most circumstances rather rude behavior (i.e. rushing at and tackling a total stranger).

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But what about a person smoking a cigarette? Do you have the right to tackle him and pluck the cigarette out of his mouth? Studies certainly have shown that smoking over a long period of time can in many cases lead to cancer. However, the bad outcome (cancer) and the event which leads to it (smoking a single cigarette) are much more tenuous and distant. And, even more importantly, you are directly interfering with the person's will. He is doing something that he truly wants (and presumably enjoys) to do. It is not even *per se* immoral.

Or what about someone who eats lots of pastries and fried food? Or does not have enough citrus in his diet? Should you even say something to him? Normally, no, you should not, because it is not your business unless you are his doctor—or his wife!

"So what is this all about!?" the reader may be thinking, impatiently.

This is all about my stunned reaction to reading blog comments on various traditional liturgical blogs upon the release of *Universae Ecclesiae* on May 13th. This of course was the long-awaited instruction making more specific the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum* for the traditional Mass and sacraments of the Roman Rite. I thought that it was a triumph, but about fifty to sixty percent of the comments on one blog in particular saw it as being anywhere from "weak" to a "disaster."

I won't get too far into the specifics of the debate, but it seems to me that what it boils down to is that the classic "traditionalist" (with exceptions, of course) wants to have truth without charity or prudence. The bitter tone that I have encountered so many times certainly seems to stem from really bad experiences in the liturgy and in the church in general. Fair enough. I am very sympathetic. I have had such bad experiences myself. I know the effect that it can have on one's psyche.

I must admit, that even the most bitter of traditionalists can make some very good (even excellent) points, intellectually.

Also, I must admit, that even the most bitter of traditionalists can make some very good (even excellent) points, intellectually. (The less bitter ones make even better points!) In fact, arguments which would have been thought irredeemably "retrograde and traditionalist" on liturgical matters only ten years ago, have now made it into papal and Vatican documents—such as *Universae Ecclesiae*! Liturgical tradition is beginning to win big! However, I sometimes think that traditional-ists act like they live in caves with internet-access. Do they not have families, or go to work, or have to deal with their fellow man? Evidently, they haven't had much experience trying to persuade people with points of view other than their own, or they somehow think the church is not, in addition to being a divine society, a very human society.

I think that it stems from some sort of false expectation that the pope was going to close up all possible loopholes and *make* the "bad people" in the church accept the Tridentine Mass (and the truth!)—even though the new instruction actually does close up loopholes (e.g. ¶28) and does offer even greater recourse against those who thwart the desire for a traditional Mass (¶10). The church clearly was listening to the cries of the traditionalist faithful!

Yet, as one commentator said, responding to such complainers, "the pope has given you an ice cream cone, and you respond by pushing it in his face."

Another cause for upset seems to have been that the document did not give an entirely separate enclave to the "true believers" to avoid all possible contagion (e.g. an apostolic administration). This is the old separatist tendency among conservatives. ("The true church consists of me and thee, but I am not too certain about thee.") "Leave me and my kind alone with the truth. Anyone else who does not get it right away can just rot." And yet, what did our Lord say in the parable of the wheat and the tares?

Another common complaint in the comboxes had to do with the continued use of the terms extraordinary form and ordinary form for the 1962 liturgical books versus the 1970 liturgical books—that these are "two usages of the one Roman Rite." "But this is not so! They are two different rites! How can the pope state such falsehoods? etc. This is not the *truth*!" was an angry combox complaint. Someone pointed out that these are juridical terms and a rather clever, prudential way to deal with a troublesome situation in the church—a situation whose reality many (including in the hierarchy) are not yet ready to acknowledge about serious problems with the liturgical reform. Inevitably, the response was something along the lines of "Christ wasn't afraid to speak the truth, neither should the pope—no matter what the cost." Really? Again, here is the assumption that in every single case a truth, any truth, is so important that it trumps charity and prudence.

With these new tools that the Holy Father has given us, the restoration of the full experience of the Roman Liturgy is inevitable.

In other words, go ahead and tackle that person smoking a cigarette, or not getting enough citrus in his diet, because no amount of rudeness can be spared in getting the truth to people!

The fact is that the percentage of Catholics devoted to the extraordinary form today is still very small. Yet, arguably such Catholics have—if not the truth—important parts of the truth about a proper view of the liturgy. The church is beginning to recognize this in her policy *and* magisterium (*Universae Ecclesiae,* ¶8). Yet probably most Catholics are more or less content with the *status quo*—and these are our brethren, too!

The liberal interviewed on the radio in the 1970s was wrong about the matter at hand, but right about tactics. The Pope *does* have to "take into account the sensibilities of all sorts of different people—and different cultures" and, I would add, cultural deformations. The issue of the liturgy is important—very important—but a person attending a valid Mass, even one involving guitars, using the 1970 Missal is *not* in imminent spiritual danger. (As much as it may pain some of us to admit.) But such people have been cut off from their own liturgical tradition—and this is not a healthy situation for the church in the long run.

Therefore, I think that with these new tools that the Holy Father has given us, the restoration of the full experience of the Roman Liturgy is *inevitable*. And this will be much healthier for the faithful. However, it will involve hard work, sacrifice—and even some disappointment in the short run. And, since the church includes fallen men of all types, it must necessarily involve much charity and prudence, too.