SACRED MUSIC

Volume 138, Number 4
Winter 2011

SACRED MUSIC Formed as a continuation of *Caecilia,* published by the Society of St. Caecilia since 1874, and *The Catholic Choirmaster,* published by the Society of St. Gregory of America since 1915. Published quarterly by the Church Music Association of America since its inception in 1965. Office of Publication: 12421 New Point Drive, Richmond, VA 23233.

E-mail: sacredmusic@musicasacra.com; Website: www.musicasacra.com

Editor: William Mahrt
Managing Editor: Jeffrey Tucker
Associate Managing Editor: Jennifer Donelson
Editorial Assistant: David Sullivan
Editor-at-Large: Kurt Poterack
Typesetting: Judy Thommesen
Membership & Circulation: 12421 New Point Drive, Richmond, VA 23233

Membership in the Church Music Association of America includes a subscription to the quarterly journal *Sacred Music*. Membership is $48.00 annually. Parish membership is $200 for six copies of each issue. Single copies are $10.00. Send requests and changes of address to *Sacred Music*, 12421 New Point Drive, Richmond, VA 23233. Make checks payable to the Church Music Association of America. Online membership: www.musicasacra.com. *Sacred Music* archives for the years 1974 to the present are available online as www.musicasacra.com/archives. *Caecilia* archives for most issues of the years 1932–37 and 1953–65 are available at www.musicasacra.com/caecilia.

LC Control Number: sf 86092056
Sacred Music is indexed in the Catholic Periodical and Literature Index, Music Index, Music Article Guide, and Arts and Humanities Index.

ISSN: 0036-2255

Sacred Music is published quarterly for $48.00 per year by the Church Music Association of America. Periodicals postage paid at Richmond, VA and at additional mailing officies. USPS number 474-960. Postmaster: Send address changes to SACRED MUSIC, 12421 New Point Drive, Richmond, VA 23233.

EDITORIALS

By William Mahrt

Singing at Mass

"What should we sing at Mass?"
"Do not sing at Mass, sing the Mass."[1]

This little dialogue points up the fact that, despite common usage, the various parts of the Mass where songs or hymns are sung actually have already been provided with specific music: the Proper of the Mass, Gregorian chants for the introit, gradual, alleluia or tract, offertory, and communion. But you will say, "How do we get there from here? Our congregation is attached to the hymns, and the Gregorian propers would exclude the people from the singing."

Fr. John-Mark Missio, in this issue, presents an extended discussion of the question. He chronicles the rather quick abandonment of proper texts for the "four-hymn sandwich" after the council and then approaches the question from the point of view of the prescribed texts of the Mass Propers, advocating the gradual substitution of better pieces which come closer to the actual texts of the psalms, the basis of most of the Mass Propers. In this, he is proposing the kind of gradualism that I have always suggested, though its application in the particular parish can vary considerably.

Fr. Missio's work was originally a dissertation presented in 2006; since then, much has been achieved in the development of the Proper of the Mass. Chant-like propers in English have been published and adopted for use in many places,[2] and Latin Gregorian communion antiphons have now been provided with accompanying psalm verses.[3] His focus upon the texts of the propers has shown an important link in the development of a sense of what is most properly sung in the liturgy and in its gradual application.

The paradigm of this discussion remains the Gregorian propers, but even with the Gregorian propers themselves, there is a gradualism to be recommended. This was first laid out in *Musicam Sacram*, shortly after the council. This document proposes a gradual introduction of singing in the context of its assertion that the distinction between the low Mass and the high Mass is to be retained; in other words, the completely sung Mass, as the council itself asserted,[4] is to be the goal of this gradualism. It proceeds

[1]This follows an administrative response of the Vatican to an inquiry about singing hymns at Mass, "singing means singing the Mass not just singing during Mass," *Notitiae*, 5 (1969), 406, reported in *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979*: *Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts*, ed. International Commission on English in the Liturgy (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 1299, note R4.

[2]For example, Adam Bartlett, *Simple English Propers for the Ordinary Form of Mass: Sundays and Feasts* (Richmond, Va.: Church Music Association of America, 2011).

[3]*Communio*, ed. Richard Rice (Richmond, Va.: Church Music Association of America, 2007).

[4]"Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people," Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶113 <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_

William Mahrt is editor of *Sacred Music* and president of the CMAA. mahrt@stanford.edu

in three stages, the first is the priest's parts, including his dialogues with the people, the orations, the preface, the Sanctus, and the Lord's Prayer; the second is the remaining parts of the ordinary and the intercessions; and the third is the propers, including potentially the lessons.[5] It must be insisted that this was not presented as a way of varying the celebration of the Mass from day to day, but rather a way of gradually and consistently achieving a completely sung Mass.

A similar gradualism applies to the chanted propers. It may be the best option to begin with rather simple propers in the vernacular, occasionally incorporating more elaborate ones, and when the time is opportune, gradually changing over to the Latin Gregorian ones. Whether complete Latin propers can be achieved will vary considerably from place to place, but this ideal should be the goal. The level of solemnity and the stylistic differentiation among the various genres (introit, gradual, etc.) are among the reasons the full Gregorian propers are an ideal to be aimed for.

The use of the Gregorian propers, however, raises questions of congregational participation, since these changing pieces are beyond the capability of a congregation. The solution to this problem lies in the congregation's singing of the Ordinary of the Mass—Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. The council prescribes this as an important possibility: "steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them."[6] As a congregation becomes more accustomed to singing parts of the ordinary, parts of the proper can gradually be given to the choir without depriving the people of full and fundamental participation in the liturgical action. Processional chants accompany other actions, while the sung parts of the ordinary are in themselves the liturgical actions at that point in the Mass and therefore most appropriately sung by the whole congregation.

The use of Latin may be an obstacle for some. I have elsewhere maintained that Gregorian chants are best suited to the Latin language, that they are most beautiful when sung in Latin, and that this beauty is fundamental to the liturgy. However, I suggested that an English version of the full Gregorian melodies might be a stage in coming to the use of the Latin Gregorian chants.[7] This position was given a gentlemanly criticism by Paul Ford, who asserted that "the music is not primary, the words are," arguing against such English adaptations, after having asserted that the vernacular was nearly a necessity. I would respond that the relative importance of text and music varies from piece to piece in the sung liturgy: the text is most prominent in the lessons and prayers; the music is a little more prominent in the chants of the ordinary; in the chants of the proper it is considerably more important. Still, especially for the propers, I would never assert that either the text or the music was primary. These proper chants grew up as chants, not as texts prescribed to be set to music; from their very origins they were a synthesis of text and music in which neither dominates the other completely; from time to time in the course of a piece, the relationship between text and music actually fluctuates.

Their liturgical function depends upon their texts, but it also depends at least as much upon their music, since, as I would maintain, the purpose of processional chants (introit, offertory, and communion) is as much to project a sense of solemnity and order, to convey the sacredness of the actions as it is to present a particular text. Likewise, the meditation chants (gradual, alleluia, and tract) achieve their function principally through their music and the use of melisma, though their texts make an important contribution to this as well.

---

council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html>

[5]*Musicam sacram* (1967), ¶28–31; *Documents on the Liturgy*, 1298–1299 <http://www.adoremus.org/MusicamSacram.html>

[6]*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶54.

[7]William Mahrt, Editorial: "Practical Sacrality," *Sacred Music*, 137, no. 4 (2010), 5.

Ford inadvertently gives support to this notion:

> William Mahrt's premise is characteristic of the proponents of the musical reform of the musical reform: "Music must be the vehicle of maintaining the sacredness of the liturgy, at least when it is music that is unambiguously sacred."[8] My premise is that the essence of the *musical* reform of the Second Vatican Council is contained in the following passage from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:*
>
> ¶112. . . . Sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.[9]

It is precisely the purposeful stylistic variation of the Gregorian propers which beautifully complement the liturgical actions, as I have shown elsewhere.[10] They project a sense of motion, order, and purpose suitable to each liturgical action, which makes their beauty so appropriate to the liturgy, contributing delight, unity, and solemnity, as the council says. These attributes come at least as much from the music as from the texts. They are, in fact, attributes of things of beauty, and it is the beauty of the Gregorian chants together with the way each chant complements the liturgical action that is an important reason the council said that Gregorian chant should have principal place in the Roman Rite.

Incidentally, I have avoided such terms as "the musical reform of the musical reform," or even "the reform of the reform," with regard to chant. Rather, I contend, as Msgr. Schuler did, that the continued use of Gregorian chant in the liturgy was an essential part of the council's original view of the role of music. The reform, then or now, pertains to the gradual achievement of that goal in the celebration of the liturgy.

Editing *Sacred Music*

For six years Jeffrey Tucker has served as managing editor of *Sacred Music*. He has born the preponderance of the work of producing the issues with unprecedented dedication, effort, and commitment, even with great sacrifice and at some personal cost, all this while maintaining a demanding professional career. To assist in continuing this work, and divide up the labors, we now welcome Jennifer Donelson as associate managing editor. She is well known to us for her organizational, scholarly, and musical abilities, demonstrated most recently by the Tournemire conference she organized, reported in the "News" below. Our thanks to her for assuming these tasks; we look forward to fruitful collaboration.

[8]Ibid., 3.

[9]Paul F. Ford, "Authentic Liturgy, Authentic Chant," *GIA Quarterly*, Fall, 2011, 16–20, here 18 <http://www.giamusic.com/pdf/GIAQAuthenticLiturgyAuthenticChantPaulFord.pdf>

[10]William Mahrt, "Gregorian Chant As a Paradigm of Sacred Music," *Sacred Music*, 132, no. 1 (2006), 5–14.

ARTICLE

The Proper Chants of the Entrance, Offertory, and Communion Processions as Models of Liturgical Hymnody

By Rev. John-Mark Missio

> *The custom legitimately in use in certain places and widely confirmed by indults, of substituting other songs for the songs given in the* Graduale *for the Entrance, Offertory, and Communion, can be retained according to the judgment of the competent territorial authority, as long as songs of this sort are in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast, or with the liturgical season. It is for the same territorial authority to approve the texts of these songs.*[1]
>
> *Musicam Sacram*, ¶32

PREFACE

In the musical environment of a typical parish, where hymnody seems to be a free-for-all, is there a way back to the use of the propers along a pastorally sensitive path? Can a corpus of hymnody be molded into a shape that reveals something of the church's canonical chant, and prepares a community for a reintroduction of propers?

Since the writing of this paper in 2006, I have become even more enamored of the proper chants of the Mass, and less interested in the use of hymns in their place. However, I believe this essay still has great currency for musicians and priests who face the pastoral reality of most parish music programs, where hymnody is much beloved, and the concept of propers is utterly alien. The most effective ap-

---

Rev. John-Mark Missio is presently a doctoral candidate at the Liturgical Institute. This article is based upon a dissertation submitted to the Liturgical Institute of the University of St. Mary of the Lake for the degree of Master of Arts (Liturgical Studies). Fr. John-Mark Missio, B.Math, B.Music, S.T.L, M.Div. a graduate of Saint Augustine Seminary (Toronto), has a degree in Mathematics from the University of Waterloo, in addition to his many studies in music at the Royal Conservatory (Toronto), Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo), and the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music (Rome). Fr. Missio was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Toronto in 1996, and after serving in two parishes he was called to be Associate Director of the Saint Michael Choir School in 2003. He had previously undertaken studies at the Liturgical Institute (Mundelein). From 2004 to 2009, Fr. Missio was director of the choir school.

[1]Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Musicam Sacram*, March 5, 1967, ¶32, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, tr. Austin P. Austin Flannery (New York: Pillar, 1975), p. 80 <http://www.adoremus.org/MusicamSacram.html>

proach to turn the tide may often involve working with the best of what is in use, and gradually steering into unfamiliar waters. The long history of the proper chants, and the circumstances that eclipsed them at the Second Vatican Council described below, should also provide useful justification for directing the musical life of a parish back in the direction of these hallowed chants.

INTRODUCTION

Our common experience of Sunday liturgy often begins with a rousing familiar hymn. One parish might join in a hearty rendition of *How Great Thou Art* to the swelling of a mighty pipe organ; another across town might call the faithful to worship in a joyful gospel version of *Amazing Grace*; still another down the road might make a gentle transition from silence to song via the strains of a Taizé gathering chant. All three are celebrating the same rite, and the same Sunday in the liturgical calendar, but singing different entrance songs. They will listen to the same readings proclaimed and sing the words of the same responsorial psalm. They will sing diverse offertory, communion, and closing songs, but attend to the same presidential prayers, and likely the same Eucharistic prayer.

For many of the faithful today, this pattern of Sunday liturgy satisfies a widely-felt contemporary need for both unity and diversity. Yet few are aware that this diversity comes from a substitution, and that the matter of that substitution is more and more the cause of concern. *Musicam Sacram*, ¶32 allowed for this diversity in the songs we sing during the entrance, offertory, and communion processions of the Mass. (Naturally that diversity is extended to the closing hymn as well.) Diversity of style is not the concern of this paper;[2] rather the concern here is the diversity of the *content* of the hymns which have been substituted for the proper texts of the introit, offertory, and communion chants.

Conern for theological correctness of hymns has come from the highest authorities in the church.

Recently, concern over the theological correctness of hymns has come from the highest authorities in the church, prompting a monition in the latest instruction on the correct implementation of the Vatican Council's liturgical reform, *Liturgiam Authenticam*. It is hoped that this paper will contribute to an understanding of the difficulties that have come about from making use of the freedom supplied by *Musicam Sacram,* ¶32 without ensuring that the new repertoire of liturgical hymnody was regulated according to criteria found elsewhere in *Musicam Sacram* and other documents.

Indeed, it will be seen that the proper chants constitute the best model available for a complete repertoire of hymns if substitutes for the chants themselves are felt to be necessary.

First I will examine the history of the proper chants, in order to situate these chants in the development of the liturgy, and examine the treatment of the processional chants in different ages, to show the contribution this stable repertoire gave to the church, and glean ideas for our own time from the way they were adapted in the past.

Next, an examination of the changes at the time of Vatican II will permit us to reveal elements of the climate in which *Musicam Sacram,* ¶32 was introduced, as there were factors that only become evident with hindsight that resulted in a flood of new hymns and songs which would be helpful in the short term, but would prove inadequate as time progressed.

[2][Though diversity of musical style is important for Gregorian propers. Ed.]

This will be followed by analyses of themes which emerge as the documents and resulting developments in hymnody are scrutinized, such as: the theology of liturgical song that comes across in *Musicam Sacram* and subsequent documents; the formational effects of singing; the use of scripture as song; and so on.

Finally, some conclusions will be stated that will hopefully prove useful as our repertoire of hymns is re-evaluated. The proper processional chants for the entrance, offertory, and communion will prove to be an indispensable source of inspiration for this new repertoire.[3]

1. THE HISTORY OF THE PROPER PROCESSIONAL CHANTS

An examination of the history of the processional chants can help explain exactly what has been replaced in the current widespread use of substitutes for these chants. In this historical overview, I hope to establish that the body of such chants was not a mere accident of history, but the result of both a natural evolution of the liturgy and the diligent opus of a very liturgically astute community of believers who were steeped in the knowledge and language of scripture. The high regard given to this corpus of liturgical song will be seen over the centuries, and it will be shown that when variation did occur, a certain respect for the texts was maintained.

In particular, this chapter will begin with a summary of the extensive research into the evolution of the propers by James W. McKinnon. In a landmark work entitled *The Advent Project: the Later Seventh-Century Creation of the Roman Mass Proper*,[4] McKinnon extensively documents the history of the propers and makes a strong case that the bulk of the repertoire of chants was born out of liturgical developments around the formation of the liturgical year, at which time the season of Advent was firmly established as a part of the liturgical cycle.

I begin, however conjectural the earliest origins may be, by situating the processional chants in the context of liturgical song in general.

1.1 New Testament Background: Scriptural Bases for Liturgical Song

Singing at the Eucharist has its roots in the very Supper at which it was founded: "And while singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:26). The singing of the Hallel Psalms (Pss. 113–118) was part of the celebration of the evening meal on the first night of the Passover feast,[5] and it is reasonable to assume that such psalms were among those sung at the Last Supper. Christians continued to sing: "be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and

[3]For the purposes of this paper, little will be said of graduals, alleluias, tracts, and sequences. The texts of the responsorial psalm and gospel acclamations, which have generally replaced the first three, are fixed, and substitution is limited by the rubrics to seasonal psalms that may be substituted for the responsorial psalm. These elements have not given way to substitute texts of dubious content as have the three elements named in *Musicam Sacram*, ¶32.

[4]James W. McKinnon, *The Advent Project: the Later Seventh-Century Creation of the Roman Mass Proper* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000); for reviews, not always uncritical, see, among others, Joseph Dyer, *Early Music History,* 20 (2001), 279–309; David Hiley, *Music & Letters,* 84 (2003), 646–651; Peter Jeffery, *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* 56 (2003), 169–179; Andreas Pfisterer, *Kirchenmusikalisches Jahrbuch*, 85 (2001), 31–53; Susan Rankin, *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 11 (2002), 73–82.

[5]Ibid., 19.

hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart" (Eph. 5:19); "Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing" (James 5:13).

It should not be surprising, then, that certain passages in the New Testament may be fragments of hymns (e.g. Tim. 3:16); yet McKinnon cautions that such passages could be anywhere along a spectrum from "rhetorical prose" to full-blown hymnody. In any case, it is impossible to conclude anything about the liturgical context in which they were used.

The singing of psalms had a place outside both temple and synagogue, particularly at family meals.

Tempting as it is to see a continuity between the singing of psalms in synagogue worship and the same in Christian worship, McKinnon asserts that "the essential difficulty in tracing early Christian liturgy to the synagogue is that certain of the purportedly relevant synagogue liturgical practices, most notably the singing of daily psalms, postdate the beginnings of Christianity."[6] While psalms were sung as part of temple worship, it seems that in the synagogue, the Book of Psalms was read alongside the other "prophetic" books, of which it was considered a member. McKinnon argues that profound respect for the temple liturgy, and hence a desire not to mimic it outside the temple, may have been a factor. Yet the singing of psalms had a place outside both temple and synagogue, particularly at family meals.[7]

1.2 The Post-Apostolic Period: Ambiguity of "Song" versus "Psalm"

Moving forward in time through the descriptions of early Christian worship, references to singing at worship are often found, particularly in descriptions of praise at evening ritual meals, whether Eucharistic or not. There is, for example, in Tertullian: "After the washing of hands and lighting of lamps, each is urged to come into the middle and sing to God either from the sacred scriptures or from his own invention."[8]

A particularly descriptive passage is also found in Hippolytus:

> And let them arise therefore after supper and pray; let the boys sing psalms, the virgins also. And afterwards let the deacon, as he takes the mingled chalice of oblation, say a psalm from those in which Alleluia is written. And afterwards, if the presbyter so orders, again from these psalms. And after the bishop has offered the chalice, let him say a psalm from those appropriate to the chalice—always one with Alleluia, which all say. When they recite the psalms, let all say Alleluia, which means, "We praise him who is God; glory and praise to him who created the entire world through his work alone." And when the psalm is finished let him bless the chalice and give of its fragments to all the faithful.[9]

[6]Ibid., 407n.

[7]Ibid., 31.

[8]Tertullian, *Apologeticum* XXXIX, 16–18; tr. McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 22.

[9]Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, 25; tr. McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 22.

McKinnon points out that the terms "psalm" and "hymn" are "completely interchangeable in patristic usage," though sometimes it can be ascertained from the context whether or not a scriptural psalm is intended. There is also ambiguity in the terms "sing" and "say." His survey of the literature indicates that "sing" and "say" "are used in patristic literature to cover a great variety of liturgical utterance from simple recitation to tuneful song."[10]

By the mid-second century, the Eucharistic celebration had been separated from the evening meal, and transferred to the following morning. The few descriptions we have of this liturgy (such as Justin Martyr's *Apology*) do not mention psalmody (or even song in general). Psalmody is not mentioned again until descriptions of the later fourth century, with one set of exceptions: passages from Tertullian's Montanist period, indicating the use of "psalms," though one instance clearly refers not to biblical psalms, but an inspired song.[11]

The monastic movement of the early fourth century was a major force in the rise of psalmody in Christian liturgy.

A significant factor in the rise of prominence of singing the psalms in worship may have been a prejudice against hymnody beginning in the third century, when certain heretical sects used hymnody as a means of proselytization. Tertullian writes: "The psalms come to our aid on this point, not the psalms of that apostate, heretic and Platonist, Valentinus, but those of the most holy and illustrious prophet David."[12] To be fair, McKinnon notes that such heretical hymns were also countered by the composition of orthodox hymns; and that there are other reasons for the rise of popularity of psalmody at the Eucharist.

Thus all that can be said with some degree of certainty about singing at the Eucharist in the second and third centuries is: in the Liturgy of the Word, a psalm may have been chanted or read, but principally as a reading from a prophetic book; the execution might have varied depending on the ability of the reader. There is a likelihood that a psalm was sung during the distribution of communion, since this part of the liturgy is so closely connected with the evening meal and its attendant singing of psalms.

1.3 The Early Fourth Century: Psalms to the Forefront

The monastic movement of the early fourth century was a major force in the rise of psalmody in Christian liturgy. Continuous recitation of the psalter provided the ideal means to realize Paul's exhortation to pray constantly. Contemporary descriptions of monastic life frequently praise the effect of this prayer. Chrysostom writes: "As soon as they are up, they stand and sing the prophetic hymns with great harmony, and well ordered melody." When close connections existed between monastic communities and urban centers, as at Jerusalem, the extent of monastic psalmody exerted an influence on the morning and evening prayer of the city's cathedral. The select psalmody at the core of the cathedral office became enveloped by extended singing of the psalms. Egeria notes that the bishop, who presides mainly at the cathedral liturgy, would delay his entrance until the psalms of the monastic cursus had run their course; only then would he enter for the cathedral vespers.[13] The monks also influenced the early morning preparation for the Eucharist, holding an extended vigil

[10]McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 23.

[11]Ibid., 27.

[12]Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, XX, 3; tr. McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 30.

[13]McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 37–38.

of prayers, readings, and psalms. Egeria observes that when the monks and nuns were absent, the laity carried on the same format themselves.[14]

1.4 Later Fourth Century: Early Links of Processions with Psalms

McKinnon notes that:

> the closing decades of the fourth century were a time of unprecedented popularity for the singing of biblical psalms. There is no evidence that anything so pervasive and intense existed before this time, nor that anything quite like it would be witnessed again in the history of Christianity.[15]

Consequently, the psalmody of the Mass, which formerly had been one reading among others, if at all, was elevated to "the privileged position of a formal liturgical act."[16]

Contemporary descriptions of the Mass mention no entrance song, beginning with a greeting and readings. Augustine remarks: "We heard the Apostle [epistle], we heard the psalm, we heard the Gospel; all the divine readings . . . sound together."[17] Note that the psalm is numbered among the readings. Augustine also says: "I greeted the people, and when all had become silent there was the accustomed reading from the Holy Scriptures."[18] Basil and Chrysostom are similarly silent on the matter of an introit, and other sources "imply the absence of any ritual activity before the opening greeting of the celebrant."[19]

The closing decades of the fourth century were a time of unprecedented popularity for the singing of biblical psalms.

There is an isolated and disputed passage suggesting that a psalm was sung at the offertory. Augustine writes in his *Liber Retractationem* that a certain Hilary objected to a psalm sung "before the oblation"; Augustine refers us to his response in *Against Hilary*, now lost. Some historians argue that "before the oblation" refers to the offertory; McKinnon does not agree.[20]

The earliest references to communion psalmody are from Cyril of Jerusalem's *Mystagogical Catechesis* (c. 350 A.D.); this, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Jerome, and perhaps the *Canons of Basil* (Canon 97) all mention that Psalm 33, "Taste and see," was sung at communion. The Canons indicate that more than one psalm was sung: "The congregation shall respond with vigor after every psalm";[21] and Chrysostom proposes Psalm 144 as a communion psalm.[22]

---

[14]Ibid., 39.

[15]Ibid., 39.

[16]Ibid.

[17]St. Augustine, *Sermo* CLXV, 1; tr. McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 40.

[18]McKinnon does not give the exact source but in a footnote quotes the Latin original from *Corpus christianorum, series latina*, 48 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), p. 826.

[19]McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 19.

[20]Ibid., 41.

[21]*Canons of Basil*, 97; tr. McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 42;

[22]St. John Chrysostom, *In Psalmum cxliv, v*, 20; McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 43.

The style of psalmody was likely responsorial (Chrysostom gives a verse "sung continually in response") yet the *Canons of Basil* cited above suggest a less frequent refrain.

The singing of the responsorial psalm remains unclear in the Roman liturgy through the fifth century. Very few references exist, one of which complains of the lack of psalmody in the liturgy of the word at the time of Damasus (366–84), another speaks of its introduction by Pope Celestine (422–32).[23]

From the fifth through the eighth centuries, monasteries were established in Rome, mostly attached to the major basilicas. Thus "the musical context into which the Roman Mass propers came into being was the daily office psalmody of the monks attached to the principal basilicas."[24] It is very likely that the psalmody of these basilican monks influenced music at the Mass in the basilica, though no musical evidence is found in the introits.

The preconditions for a sung Mass Proper only gradually took shape. The first precondition is a stable order of worship with set places for singing. By the end of the fourth century, a psalm was an established element in the liturgy of the word, and a psalm during communion was in use in Carthage, Hippo, and Milan. Later evidence indicates that Rome had adopted these set places for singing by the early fifth century.[25]

1.5 *Ordo Romanus Primus*: Psalms and Processions a Norm

Its exact date unknown, *Ordo Romanus Primus* is thought to date from slightly after the time of Pope Sergius I (687–701). Sergius is known to have introduced the Agnus Dei into the order of Mass, as found in the *Ordo*. The Roman *schola cantorum* figures in the *Ordo* as a well-established institution; McKinnon estimates its founding sometime in the mid-seventh century.[26] *Ordo I* contains the "earliest unequivocal reference" to the introit, alleluia, and offertory and communion chants in the Roman liturgy.[27]

It cannot be determined if the antiphon of the introit was sung throughout or only at the beginning and the end. The pope nodded to the *schola* to finish the psalm with the *Gloria Patri* and final antiphon.

In the sixth century, a practice began of papal visits to churches of significance on certain feast days, known as "stational" liturgies. It is likely that the pope's entrance into the church called for singing, and the monks accompanying the pope from the Lateran and elsewhere sang psalms as was their custom.

Though the *Ordo I* is the earliest unequivocal reference to the Roman offertory, McKinnon suggests that the elaborate offertory rites, plus the Eastern practice of singing at the offertory was well established, the Roman offertory may date much earlier than *Ordo I*.[28] The Byzantine liturgy had introduced its offertory chant, the *Cheroubikon*, in the early sixth century, probably adopted by the Galls in the late sixth century.[29]

---

[23]McKinnon, *Advent Project*, 80.

[24]Ibid., 83.

[25]Ibid., 357.

[26]Ibid., 89.

[27]Ibid., 195, 249.

[28]Ibid., 301.

[29]Ibid., 323.

By the sixth century, the *Leonine Sacramentary* (assembled between 558 and 590) demonstrates that the era of improvised prayers by the celebrant is coming to an end; however many are duplicated, suggesting that fixed propers are not fully in vogue yet.[30] The Roman *Old Gelasian Sacramentary* (628 to 720), however, has fixed prayers for most of the year, a few Sundays being omitted. Roughly contemporary with the *Gelasian Sacramentary* was the *Gregorian*, a papal sacramentary including stational liturgies.

By the seventh century, the collection of chants for the Roman liturgy (*antiphoner*) shows greater stability than the sacramentary; chants for the Mass were more stable than the presidential prayers[31] (probably because the chants were memorized by a group, the *schola cantorum*, not an individual). An annual cycle of readings in the lectionary is established by 645 at the latest.[32] Thus the final revision of the Mass Proper could be dated from the later decades of the seventh century, and not later than 720.

The role of the Roman *schola cantorum* in the development of the liturgy at this point in its development needs to be emphasized:

> one should not look upon the Roman *schola cantorum* as a peripheral group, like the parish choir of our time that fills in the musical slots of a clerically determined order of service. It would be more accurate to think of the organization as a kind of Lateran department of liturgy. Its members were learned and distinguished Roman priests who instructed the most talented young aspirants to the clerical state in chant and the other ecclesiastical disciplines. The *schola* numbered among its alumni, in fact, no less a figure than Sergius I (687–701).[33]

The final revision of the Mass Proper could be dated from the later decades of the seventh century.

A particular event in the evolution of the liturgical calendar allows McKinnon to assert that the bulk of the propers were in place before the year 720. Prior to that date, the Thursdays in Lent were not considered "liturgical": there was no stational liturgy on that date. The psalms for Lenten weekdays are distributed in numerical sequence except for Thursdays. The antiphons for Lenten Thursdays were not newly composed, but were borrowed from other days.[34] One of these was borrowed from the feast of St. Lawrence, suggesting that the sanctoral cycle was also well-established.

1.6 Summary of the "Advent Project" Phase

On studying all the patterns and connections, and lacunae therein, McKinnon concludes:

> What all this strongly suggests is that at some point the members of the schola cantorum decided to produce a full and complete Proper of the Mass for every date in the

[30]Ibid., 105.

[31]Ibid., 109.

[32]Ibid., 116.

[33]Ibid., 152.

[34]Ibid., 133.

> church year. They began with Advent and achieved their aims with near perfection for the Advent-Christmas season but, for the rest of the year, were able to maintain their high standards only with the more manageable introits and communions. They were forced to make large-scale compromises with the more lengthy graduals and offertories, while with the alleluias, latecomers to the Mass Proper, they were barely able to get started before their great burst of creativity came to a close.[35]

Note that to fill in gaps in the year, antiphons were borrowed from the office (the so-called responsory communions).[36]

The use of Advent as a starting-point for this burst of compositional activity was likely not a matter of starting at the beginning of the church year. While there are references in other cities to pre-Christmas fasts, preparations for Christmas were entirely lacking in seventh-century Rome.[37] The development of pre-Christmas preparations in Rome gave rise to the need for new chants for this new season, and the compositional activity continued from there.

> It is in the chant books—the three Roman graduals and the six Frankish manuscripts of the *Sextuplex*—that we finally witness Advent as a season of four Sundays, without regard to the beginning of December. And of even greater significance, it is in the chant books that we finally see Advent at the beginning of the church year, in contrast to all seventh-century Roman sacramentaries and lectionaries.[38]

Finally, some developments after the "Advent project" seemed to come to an end. Having completed chants for the liturgical seasons, attention was turned more toward the sanctoral cycle. Chants for the sanctoral cycle probably began as sets of "commons": becoming more specialized and particular to certain feasts, the completion of this cycle might be dated around 690. There is a much higher percentage of non-psalmic chants in the *Sanctorale* and responsory-communions.[39] Meanwhile, in both the seasonal and sanctoral cycles, verses for the offertory, originally numbering from one to four, gradually fell into disuse from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. They were mostly ignored during the nineteenth century revival of chant.[40]

1.7 Medieval Tropes on Propers: Stability and Variation

Allowing for exceptions as the sanctoral cycle evolved, the bulk of the propers had reached the textual form in which they would remain. In the medieval period, an approach to the propers appeared which respected the canonical character of the chants, but allowed for variation. Parts of the Mass, including the propers, were occasionally "troped"; additional text was inserted, related to the original chant text, commenting on it or relating it to the feast or season being celebrated. A particularly noteworthy aspect of this process of troping is that the inserted text demonstrated a sound knowledge of scripture and great liturgical sensitivity. One historian remarks:

---

[35]Ibid., 142.

[36]Ibid., 181.

[37]Ibid., 147.

[38]Ibid., 151.

[39]Ibid., 191.

[40]Ibid., 298.

> "Troped" masses in eleventh-century Autun were very carefully crafted, built upon a common repertory of memorized texts and a common knowledge of the style of music to which texts were normally set. The services were constructed in such a way that their principal themes were developed and proclaimed in rhetorically effective ways, which evoked specific responses from the choir. These responses were enriched by their knowledge of how the biblical sources of the antiphons were interpreted in scripture commentary, and deepened the choir's involvement in the feast, by enabling them to enact what was being proclaimed.[41]

The author comments on the skillful ways in which the anonymous monastic composers of these tropes "used their command of biblical and liturgical texts and the exegetical and rhetorical finesse, in order to find connections between the Old and New Testaments."[42]

For example, a set of tropes for the Easter introit *Resurrexi* interweaves the introit text with excerpts from scripture, sewn together in a dialogical manner. (Capitalized words are the introit text:)

Whom do you seek in the tomb, O followers of Christ?
Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, O heavenly ones.
He is not here: he has risen as he said. Go, proclaim that he has risen.
Today the strong lion has risen: Christ the Son of God. Give thanks to God, eya:
I HAVE ARISEN (*Resurrexi*),
A victor, with a triumph of power,
AND I AM STILL WITH YOU: ALLELUIA.
You hold the scepter of the heavens, the earth and the sea:
YOU HAVE PLACED YOUR HAND UPON ME: ALLELUIA:
You have glorified me with deifying.
A WONDER HAS BEEN DONE
In all power
BY YOUR KNOWLEDGE: ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA:
By which you strictly govern.
O LORD, YOU HAVE TESTED ME AND HAVE KNOWN ME; YOU KNOW MY SITTING DOWN AND MY RISING UP.[43]

1.8 The Age of Polyphony

From the time of the emergence of organum in the late ninth century, composers have found the propers to be a source of inspiration for polyphonic compositions. The earliest recorded polyphonic settings of the Mass Propers were drawn more from the alleluias and tracts; the earliest major source, the *Winchester Troper* from the eleventh century, contains fifty-three alleluias and nineteen tracts, but only

[41]William T. Flynn, *Medieval Music as Medieval Exegesis*, Studies in Liturgical Musicology, 8 (London: Scarecrow, 1999), p. 243–4.

[42]Ibid., 245.

[43]Ibid., 214–5.

four introit tropes, which were later additions to the collection. Two-part settings of the offertory appear in an eleventh-century Notre Dame manuscript (*W*), though possibly originating in England; organum-style introit and offertory tropes are also found in Germanic and Italian sources from the period.[44]

After these initial efforts at composing polyphonic settings of the propers, by the fourteenth-century composers in France seem to have lost interest in the propers in favor of the Ordinary of the Mass. One historian speculates thus:

> Why the untroped ordinary assumed such a dominating role in church music is one of the unsolved problems of music history. One practical reason is certainly the fact that settings of these chants could be used at any time during the liturgical year, whereas settings of the proper as well as many ordinary tropes were restricted to a particular feast.[45]

The fifteenth century *Trent Codices*, however, demonstrate a revival in polyphonic settings of the propers, including over 250 settings of introits, graduals, offertories, and communions, associated with composers such as Dufay and Binchois.[46] One composer whose compositional interests demonstrated the reverse of the favoritism shown to the ordinary over the propers was the sixteenth-century German composer Heinrich Isaac, whose *Choralis Constantinus* contains polyphonic settings of the propers for the whole liturgical year, while his settings of the ordinary are many fewer. Palestrina also extensively composed settings of the propers (*Offertoria totius anni,* 1593), marrying the polyphonic proper settings to the chant settings by basing the polyphony on musical ideas from the chant melodies. An effort of similar magnitude from England is seen in William Byrd's *Gradualia* (1605–7).

Around the same time, vernacular hymns for devotional use began to appear alongside the liturgy. In Germany, the faithful would sing hymns during the low Mass itself. The *Cantual of Mainz* of 1605 provided German-language hymns which could be sung in the place of the propers, and eventually hymn-equivalents of the ordinary were added, giving rise to the *Singmesse*, involving choir, congregation, and accompaniment.[47] The chant settings of the propers remained the official ritual music of the liturgy, but the melodies suffered at the hands of editors as chant books were printed in the seventeenth century. The corruptions in the chant melodies would be remedied by the works of the monks of Solesmes beginning in the early nineteenth century.[48]

Settings of the Ordinary of the Mass dominated the creative energies of composers of sacred music through the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods, with little efforts given to settings of the propers (the proper texts of the Requiem Mass being a notable exception). In the later nineteenth century, the Caecilian reform movement ushered in a renewed interest in polyphonic settings of the propers in the style (more-or-less) of Palestrina. The propers were thought to be best assigned to the choir, while it was felt that congregational participation would be achieved by training the faithful to sing the Ordinary of the Mass in Gregorian Chant.[49]

---

[44]Theodor Göllner, "Mass II, 1: Polyphony to 1600," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980), XI: 781.

[45]Ibid., 782.

[46]Ibid., 784.

[47]Karl Gustav Fellerer, *The History of Catholic Church Music*, tr. F.A. Brunner (Baltimore: Helicon 1961), p. 132.

[48]Ibid., 186.

[49]Ibid., 206.

1.9 Summary

The history of the development of the propers, shows the prominence and persistence of the psalms as the foundation of these chants. The psalms have always been an important element of Christian liturgical worship, but the evolution of the liturgy hand-in-hand with the psalmody of the Liturgy of the Hours seems to have further established the psalter as the primary source for proper texts. The stability of the propers pre-dates the stability of other significant elements of the liturgy, such as the readings of the lectionary and prayers of the sacramentary. As musical genres evolved, tremendous respect was shown to the texts of the propers, and when variations occurred, such as in the medieval tropes, these texts were not substitutes but exigetical enhancements well-steeped in a living knowledge of the scriptures, both Old and New Testament in dialogue. The respect given to the propers through the centuries might be dismissed as mere adherence to tradition; however, research has demonstrated that the corpus of the proper chants was the result of a concerted effort of a schola whose lives were centered around the liturgy. Their handiwork was instrumental in forming the cycle we now cherish as our liturgical year.

2. CHANGES AT THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND BEYOND

This section is an exposition of the documents stemming from the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) which directly or indirectly addressed the use of the Propers of the Mass. First the Roman documents will be examined (*Sacrosanctum Concilium, Musicam Sacram*, and the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*). This will be followed by a brief report on the shift in practice from propers to the use of hymns in place of processional chants. The trail of documents will then be picked up again, focusing on the efforts of the American Conference of Bishops to address the changes which were taking place.

This exposition will address elements of an emerging theology of liturgical song, which will be analyzed in the final section of this paper.

2.1 *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: Active Participation as a Root Cause of Change to the Status of the Propers

After centuries of stability, the reform of the liturgy at the Second Vatican Council required a re-assessment of many facets of liturgical celebration. One of the foremost goals of the reform (if not the single-most important goal) was to foster the active participation of the faithful. All subsequent examination of the nature of the propers in the conciliar documents stems primarily from this call in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

> 30. To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes.[50]

In Chapter VI on Sacred Music, composers are exhorted to write settings of the sung parts of the Mass which enable active participation. A warning is given that "the texts intended to be sung must always be in conformity with Catholic doctrine. Indeed, they should be drawn chiefly from the sacred

[50]Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1963, ¶30, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, tr. Austin P. Flannery (New York: Pillar, 1975), p. 11.

scripture and from liturgical sources."[51] "Liturgical sources" could well include existing proper texts, but it is not clear.

The emphasis on scriptural sources is worth noting, as this criteria was largely ignored in the post-conciliar explosion of hymn composition. This emphasis is in keeping with another major thrust of the liturgical reform, which was to give the scriptures greater prominence in the life and worship of the faithful: "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly so that a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word."[52] This exhortation was certainly taken to heart in the revised lectionary. The need to apply this dictum to the texts of songs sung by the assembly was not as obvious, perhaps due to the exhortation's position in the document (i.e. in a section concerned with the Liturgy of the Word); furthermore, as we shall discuss below, there is little recognition that singing scriptural texts could be a powerful way to achieve this desired opening-up of the scriptures to the faithful.

"Why are we singing?"

The "pride of place" granted to Gregorian chant[53] presumably includes the propers, but the subsequent paragraphs discuss the welcome inclusion of other kinds of sacred music, including the indigenous music of certain countries. There is no specific mention of proper texts in this context, so it is not clear if the authors of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had given any consideration to either a desire to maintain proper texts or the implications of widespread abandonment of them.

The seed of the *Graduale Simplex*, modeled on the propers, is seen in the call for a new typical edition of the Gregorian chants: "It is desirable also that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies for use in smaller churches."[54]

2.2 *Musicam Sacram*

In *Musicam Sacram*, the authors sought to go beyond laying out the practical implementation of *Sacrosanctam Concilium*; the nature of various elements of the Mass is considered, and the implications for singing each part are explored. This could be called a "developing hymnology" (or perhaps "cantology,") since it addresses the question, "*why* are we singing?" In a logical progression to, "therefore, *what* should we sing?", one can see that the suitability of proper texts could be called into question, if the text did not reference or reinforce the moment of the liturgy. This approach begins to emerge at no. 6:

> 6. The proper arrangement of a liturgical celebration requires the due assignment and performance of certain functions, by which "each person, minister or layman, should carry out all and only those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the Liturgy."[55] This also demands that the meaning and proper nature of each part and of each song be carefully observed. To attain this, those parts especially should be sung which by their very nature require to be sung, using the kind and form of music which is proper to their character.

[51] *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶121.

[52] Ibid., ¶51.

[53] Ibid., ¶116.

[54] Ibid., ¶117.

[55] Ibid., ¶28.

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

The faithful should participate in the songs of the Propers as much as possible.

The key paragraph which altered the "properness" of the propers follows:

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

In the same breath, a desire to keep the propers follows, albeit with modifications; yet again, as in a pendulum, the document returns to substitution as an option, and allows a wide berth for the texts, emphasizing a connection with the liturgical action:

> 33. It is desirable that the assembly of the faithful should participate in the songs of the Proper as much as possible, especially through simple responses and other suitable settings.
>
> 36. There is no reason why some of the Proper or Ordinary should not be sung in said Masses. Moreover, some other song can also, on occasions, be sung at the beginning, at the Offertory, at the Communion and at the end of Mass. It is not sufficient, however, that these songs be merely "Eucharistic"—they must be in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast, or with the liturgical season.

2.3 *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (GIRM)

Discussion of proper chants and their substitutes is found in Chapter II on "Structure, Elements, and Parts of the Mass." Propers are last on the list of "Different Elements of the Mass," in a section about "Other Texts in the Celebration," which begins with a discussion of the importance of greetings (¶14 & 15); then "other parts, extremely useful for expressing and encouraging the people's active participation, that are assigned to the whole congregation: the penitential rite, the profession of faith, the general intercessions, and the Lord's Prayer" (¶16). Lastly, there is a discussion of various sung elements, concluding with the propers:

> 17. Finally, of the other texts: (a) Some constitute an independent rite or act, such as the *Gloria*, the responsorial psalm, the *alleluia* verse and the verse before the gospel, the *Sanctus*, the memorial acclamation, and the song after communion; (b) Others accompany another rite, such as the songs at the entrance, at the preparation of the gifts, at the breaking of the bread (*Agnus Dei*), and at communion.[56]

While not a strict hierarchy of importance, there is an element of this ordering which relegates the propers to a secondary role. They merely accompany another rite. This category is the furthest element from "reading and explaining the Word of God"; the proclamatory nature of proper texts does not appear to be given much consideration anywhere in the document.

At end of the section on the different elements of the Mass, the GIRM returns to the matter of the processional chants:

> 22. Included among the external actions of the Mass are those of the priest going to the altar, of the faithful presenting the gifts, and their coming forward to receive communion. While the songs proper to these movements are being sung, they should be carried out becomingly in keeping with the norms prescribed for each.

The "emerging hymnology" says that these moments are "external," in the sense that they are moments that "express and foster the spiritual attitude of those taking part."[57] The GIRM says of the opening rites in general: "The purpose of these rites is that the faithful coming together take on the form of a community and prepare themselves to listen to God's word and celebrate the Eucharist properly."[58] The detailed instructions for the execution of the introit, offertory, and communion chants also ascribe functions to the chants:

> 25. After the people have assembled, the entrance song begins as the priest and the ministers come in. The purpose of this song is to open the celebration, intensify the unity of the gathered people, lead their thoughts to the mystery of the season or feast, and accompany the procession of priest and ministers.
>
> 26. The entrance song is sung alternately either by the choir and the congregation or by the cantor and the congregation; or it is sung entirely by the congregation or by the choir alone. The antiphon and psalm of the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Simple Gradual* may be used, or another song that is suited to this part of the Mass, the day, or the seasons and that has a text approved by the conference of bishops. If there is no singing for the entrance, the antiphon in the Missal is recited either by the faithful, by some of them, or by a reader; otherwise it is recited by the priest after the greeting.
>
> 50. The procession bringing the gifts is accompanied by the presentation song, which continues at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. The rules for this song are the same as those for the entrance song (no. 26). If it is not sung, the presentation antiphon is omitted.

---

[56]Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 4th ed., March 27, 1975 < http://www.adoremus.org/GIRM(music).html>

[57]Ibid., ¶20.

[58]Ibid., ¶24.

> 56. During the priest's and the faithful's reception of the sacrament the communion song is sung. Its function is to express outwardly the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to give evidence of joy of heart, and to make the procession to receive Christ's body more fully an act of community. The song begins when the priest takes communion and continues for as long as seems appropriate while the faithful receive Christ's body. But the communion song should be ended in good time whenever there is to be a hymn after communion. An antiphon from the *Graduale Romanum* may also be used, with or without the psalm, or an antiphon with psalm from the *Simple Gradual* or another suitable song approved by the conference of bishops. It is sung by the choir alone or by the choir or cantor with the congregation. If there is no singing, the communion antiphon in the Missal is recited either by the people, by some of them, or by a reader. Otherwise the priest himself says it after he has received communion and before he gives communion to the faithful.

While there is an apparent order of precedence—*Graduale Romanum, Graduale Simplex*, other suitable and approved song—there is no emphasis placed on preferring one over the other; rather there is an emphasis on using whatever is most pastorally effective (foreshadowing the "pastoral judgment" criteria developed in *Music in Catholic Worship*, discussed below):

> 313. The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be heightened if the texts of readings, prayers, and songs correspond as closely as possible to the needs, religious dispositions, and aptitude of the participants. This will be achieved by an intelligent use of the broad options described in this chapter.

The printed version of the *Missale Romanum* itself did not include the propers as found in the *Graduale Romanum*, thus making these texts even less accessible. It did include entrance and communion antiphons, but in simplified form:

> As regards other parts of the *Roman Missal*, the text and music of the *Graduale Romanum* have been left unchanged for use when they are sung. But so as to provide some more easily intelligible texts, the Responsorial Psalm . . . has been restored to use; and, for Masses celebrated without singing, the Antiphons for the Entrance and Communion have been revised according to need.[59]

Was the inclusion of these spoken antiphons merely satisfying a sort of legalism or "rubricism," that is, "they are part of the rite therefore we should include the propers in some form"; or it is recognition that these texts have a role to play and need to be proclaimed?

2.4 The Shift from Propers to Hymnody Described

The documents produced at the council (and shortly thereafter) reflected developments in the liturgical movement that had already found some expression in the liturgy in various countries. Lucien

[59]Paul VI, *Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Missal,* April 3, 1969, Flannery, *Documents*, 141.

Deiss makes an interesting observation of a development in Europe prior to the council. Some European countries had a long tradition of vernacular hymns which were sung at the entrance, offertory, communion, and other parts of the liturgy; Deiss refers to these as "traditional songs" as he writes of a movement away from these hymns towards the use of psalms:

> There was a musical explosion of sorts during the 1950's in the singing of psalms with refrain or antiphon. The psalms were used as entrance song, responsorial psalm, "offertory," and communion processional. They practically eliminated the singing of traditional songs, so heady was the discovery of the beauty of God's Word.[60]

This trend towards greater use of the psalms seems to have foreshadowed the development of the *Simple Gradual*. However, in English-speaking countries, there seems to have been no parallel "explosion" of psalm singing; rather, we adopted hymns from the Protestant communities, who had a lively tradition of congregational singing. A pattern was established which was to become all too familiar in the decades after the council:

> During the early stages of the liturgical movement, Roman Catholics looked to the experience of the Christian churches which had long since established a vernacular musical repertory, notably the Anglican and Lutheran communions. From them they adopted vernacular hymns. In the days when the singing of the people was barely tolerated, as it were, on the fringes of the liturgy, the "four hymn" pattern evolved—entrance, offertory, communion, and recessional hymns.[61]

There was a musical explosion during the 1950's in singing of psalms with refrain or antiphon.

While some of these were metrical psalms or psalm paraphrases, most were freely-composed religious texts from a variety of times, places, and denominations. In substituting hymns from such disparate sources for the proper texts, an unfortunate disconnection took place between the processional hymns and the language of scripture. This aversion to the psalms merits further consideration. An understanding of the cause of this disconnection would help explain the direction that the celebration of the liturgy took in the years immediately following the council. One author speculates as follows:

> What are some of the possible reasons for this persistent ignorance of the psalms among the majority of Roman Catholics? First, the importance attached to the psalter in the revised rites of Vatican II was sudden and without recent precedent. Prior to the council, there was no widespread use of the psalms, in Latin or the vernacular, in either liturgical or devotional prayer. The psalms were prayed mostly by clergy and religious who were bound to the recitation of the liturgy of the hours, the divine office. Some unusual lay people, of course, used selected psalms in their prayers, for example, the penitential psalms as a form of preparation for going to confession. Some few even

[60]Lucien Deiss, *Visions of Liturgy and Music for a New Century* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 159.

[61]Margaret Daly-Denton, "Psalmody as 'Word of Christ,'" in *Finding Voice to Give God Praise: Essays in the Many Languages of the Liturgy*, ed. Kathleen Hughes (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), p. 80.

> prayed the liturgy of the hours in whole or in part. But the vast majority of Roman Catholics looked on the psalter as uncharted territory.
>
> Second, the celebration of the liturgy in Latin was a hindrance, perhaps even a positive obstruction to familiarity with the psalms. In the pre-conciliar liturgy, moreover, an experience of whole psalms was seldom if ever available, either in the mass or in the other sacramental rites. Only in the liturgy of the hours, which was prayed by religious "professionals," were entire psalms used. In other contexts, the psalms appeared primarily in the form of excerpts. At mass, for example, psalms appeared in the form of an abbreviated antiphon for the entrance procession and gradual texts, as versicle and response in the prayers at the foot of the altar, as single verses for chants at the offertory and communion, and as the private prayer of the priest at certain points in the rite. In other sacramental rites, psalm verses appeared as versicle and response and as single-verse antiphons.[62]

In addition to this distance between the average worshiper and the texts of the psalms, there was debate over the suitability of adapting the music of the proper chants to vernacular texts. While musicians were divided over the appropriateness of matching English texts with Latin chant, the chant scholars themselves would not have provided a cohesive approach to finding a solution. The state of affairs is described by one author thus:

Only in the liturgy of the hours were entire psalms used.

> Dom Joseph Pothier, who worked with Dom Prosper Gueranger at Solesmes in the late 1800's, might have been successful in applying the Gregorian art to vernacular texts. But under their successors, chant became embroiled in matters of interpretation, the preserve of specialists.[63]

No wonder that the prevailing opinion of the time, therefore, was that vernacular versions of the chant were not a solution, but that a major change was essential in the approach to hymnody. A representative quote of the overriding need for change is found in Bugnini's history of the liturgical reform:

> the change from Latin to the vernaculars meant the abandonment of forms held dear in the past and called for a creative process that would be neither easy nor short. Time and experience were needed, as well as artistic genius of a literary and musical kind."[64]

Unfortunately, there was little time, as celebrations in the vernacular began before long, and musical settings were required; consequently, the literary and musical artistic genius had little time to develop and be identified before parishes were knee-deep in vernacular hymns from whatever resources were at hand. Musical examples issued by the consilium in charge of music at the council were described as "tasteless singing that possesses neither soul nor art."[65] Time simply was not available. Musical examples could not

---

[62]James M. Schellman, "Notes on a Liturgical Psalter," *Liturgy*, no. 3 (1983), 30.

[63]David Chandler, "Gregorian Chant: Eclipse of a Great Tradition," *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, 93 (Oct 1992), 27.

[64]Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 885.

[65]Ibid., 888.

be developed in advance of the texts of the missal. Bugnini describes the way that the sudden availability of vernacular texts, and the freedom granted to make substitutions for various sung texts, meant that music for the missal developed by the consilium would not be available until well after vernacular texts and attendant hymnody had been used and well-received among the faithful: "Group 14 was assigned the study of the various forms of singing in the Mass . . . it had to wait for decisions on the structure and euchological texts of the *Missal*."

The entrance and communion antiphons of the missal were intended to be recited, not sung.

Meanwhile, especially as use of the vernacular in the liturgy was extended, the situation changed completely. The principal role in choosing and adopting repertories of songs for celebrations in the vernacular had to be left to the episcopal conferences; a Roman group could only provide general criteria for passing judgment. The entrance and communion antiphons of the missal were intended to be recited, not sung, and to inspire the creation of suitable songs in the vernacular. "As a result of all this, group 14 could do nothing but offer technical assistance."[66] Bugnini describes the discussion of the paragraph in the GIRM which undid the "properness" of the propers:

> There was full discussion of [no 32. in the final text], which allowed the chants of the Mass to be replaced by other songs approved by the episcopal conferences. The instruction restricted itself to confirming the indults granted to certain countries for this purpose. Those concerned in these indults, namely, the consultors and members from the German-speaking countries, supported retention of this number; others regarded it as unnecessary because it referred to particular cases; still others thought that the *Graduale Simplex* would handle the situation. The majority, however, saw the pastoral advantage of having other songs besides the psalms for the proper of the Mass.
>
> The paragraph was put to a vote and accepted. It would subsequently play a very important role, because the episcopal conferences would appeal to it as a basis for asking the same indult for their regions. The principle of songs in the vernacular would be extended to the entire Church in the reformed Roman Missal.[67]

Concerned choir directors expressed their fears to the Consilium that the traditional chants would be lost in the freedom now given to substitute other hymns for the chants. The Consilium responded:

> The only thing new in the Constitution is that for sound and unquestionable pastoral reasons it now bestows the rights of citizenship in holy Church on popular religious song, which for that matter is widely recommended in the most recent legislation. We can see no reason why this kind of singing cannot be fostered and coexist peacefully with the traditional musical genres for the glory of God and the fuller participation of the Christian people in the worship of the Lord.[68]

[66]Ibid., 891.

[67]Ibid., 902–3.

[68]Ibid., 888.

The "coexistence" imagined by the Consilium seems naive in light of the overwhelming embrace of "popular religious song" which immediately followed the council. Deiss describes the shift dramatically, in an article that discusses particularly the near-disappearance of the psalms in the immediate post-conciliar period:

> There was a second explosion, that of the new canticles. Some of these songs, rooted in biblical thought, are very beautiful and seem ageless. This second explosion first marginalized, then did away with, the singing of the psalms. Even the responsorial psalm, which belongs to the celebration of the Word of God, was sometimes replaced by a meditative song. As regards the communion processional, the majority of parish communities (all of them?) choose to sing a song, whether as a processional or as a hymn after communion.[69]

One author points out that this connection between ritual moment and accompanying hymn was taken far too literally and rather prosaically:

> One of the side effects of this was to establish a presupposition that the hymn should comment on the liturgical action during which it is sung. Thus we had a proliferation of gathering songs for the entrance, offering songs for what was then called the offertory, "Eucharistic" songs for the communion procession, and missioning songs for the recessional.[70]

While parishes gradually moved beyond the four-hymn syndrome, it would be a long time before questions about the content of this hymnody would be raised and addressed. It was a secondary concern as the faithful were drawn more and more into participating enthusiastically in liturgical singing.

2.5 American Developments: Various Documents from the Conference of Bishops

We now turn our attention to comments from the American Conference of Catholic Bishops in the years that followed the start of the Second Vatican Council.

In "The Use of the Vernacular at Mass" (November 1964), the bishops express their concern that despite the use of the vernacular, the general lack of familiarity with the scriptures would be an obstacle to a full and proper understanding of the liturgy. The biblical language of the scriptures, so rich in symbolism, would be lost on many. Praying the psalms as Christian prayers is singled out as an example of such difficulties.[71]

---

[69]Deiss, *Visions*, 159.

[70]Daly-Denton, "Psalmody," 80.

[71]Bishops Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, "The Use of the Vernacular at Mass," November, 1964, in *Thirty Years of Liturgical Renewal: Statements of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy*, ed. Frederick R. McManus (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1987), p. 27.

In "Music in the Renewal of the Liturgy," (1965), the American bishops spoke of the "urgent need" for music in the vernacular. Musicians are encouraged to write music that is "true art," and it is emphasized that it must be well-suited to the "distinctive accent and rhythm" of English. It begins by recognizing the "inadequacies of adaptations into English of music written for other languages and other cultures."[72] There is no discussion of the texts; perhaps the disappearance of the propers had not yet been envisioned.

In "English in the Liturgy: Part II" (February 1966), there seemed to have been some enthusiasm from official quarters that proper psalmody was going to work:

> Leaflets, booklets, and books are now available so that the four proper chants of Mass may be sung or recited by the people or a group of people or by a choir. . . . The three processional chants of Mass—at the celebrant's entrance, at the preparation of the bread and wine, at the communion—may be supplemented by psalm verses, as has been frequently recommended in official documents. In fact, the brief antiphons become clear in the structure of Mass only when they are sung or recited as refrains to psalm verses."[73]

However, in "Church Music" (1966), they acknowledge the "more pressing need for musical compositions in idioms that can be sung by the congregation and thus further communal participation." Yet they warn that even in special groups such as youth gatherings, "the liturgical texts should be respected. The incorporation of incongruous melodies and texts, adapted from popular ballads, should be avoided."[74] (It is not clear if this refers to propers or the ordinary.)

There seemed to have been some enthusiasm from official quarters that proper psalmody was going to work.

In "Liturgical Renewal" (1967):

> The present need is for better liturgical education and, thus, a more profound understanding of the spirit and purpose of renewal. A deeper knowledge of the Scriptures and a better biblical orientation are essential to this educational process. . . . Sometimes, the present liturgy seems to include abstract and irrelevant elements. . . . We should try to make the liturgy, especially the Eucharistic liturgy, as concrete and contemporary as possible.
>
> There are many means to this goal: the use of introductory comment by a lay or clerical commentator; the selection of texts when there is free choice, especially sacred songs, refrains, and responses; efforts to set the biblical readings in proper context.[75]

There is some irony in this call for a better scriptural context and better familiarity with scripture. Singing scripture could have done this; yet the songs are seen rather as a priority item to make the liturgy as "concrete and contemporary as possible."

---

[72]Music Advisory Board of the Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, "Music in the Renewal of the Liturgy," May 5, 1965, in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 34.

[73]Bishops' Commission, "English in the Liturgy: Part II," in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 40.

[74]Bishops' Commission, "Church Music," in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 44.

[75]National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Liturgical Renewal," in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 74–5.

In "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations" (November 1967), which was a response to the publication of *Musicam Sacram*, it appears that there was hope that the *Graduale Simplex* might succeed in translation:

> It is planned that further recommendations and guidelines will be published when the texts of the *Simple Gradual* and other alternatives to the present liturgical chants become available in English.[76]

However, the authors express concern that exclusive use of psalms will be problematic:

> The liturgy, by its nature, normally presupposes a minimum of biblical culture and a fairly solid commitment of living faith. Often enough, these conditions are not present. The assembly or many of its members are still in need of evangelization. The liturgy which is not meant to be a tool of evangelization, is forced into a missionary role. In these conditions, the music problem is complex. On the one hand, music can serve as a bridge to faith, and therefore, greater liberty in the selection and use of musical materials may be called for. On the other hand, certain songs normally called for in the climate of faith (e.g. psalms and religious songs), lacking such a climate, may create problems rather than solve them.[77]

In the accompanying recommendations, there is a significant change in the order of precedence for the choice of processional chants, as hymns are mentioned first, then psalms, and no mention of either *Graduale*. One cannot help but feel the irony that the term "proper" is now used in the context of function, rather than something proper to a given day or season:

Music can serve as a bridge to faith.

> 2.d. Recommendations for the celebration of the entrance rite: (1) The musical setting of the entrance song should help the celebration tone of the entrance rite. There are a number of possibilities: the hymn, unison or choral, or both; psalms in various settings with or without the refrain.[78]
>
> [Offertory:] The proper function of this song is to accompany and celebrate the communal aspects of the procession. The text, therefore, can be any appropriate song of praise or of rejoicing in keeping with the season.[79]
>
> [The communion song] should foster an experience of unity . . . [and] can be any song that is fitting for the feast or the season; it can speak of the community aspects of the Eucharist.[80]

---

[76]Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations," in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 96.

[77]Ibid., 100–1.

[78]Ibid., 102.

[79]Ibid., 103.

[80]Ibid., 104.

2.6 *Music in Catholic Worship*

The theology of liturgical song that finds some expression in the Vatican documents blossoms into a developed "Theology of Celebration" in *Music in Catholic Worship*. Theological and philosophical explanations of singing abound in this document. There is a strong emphasis on the expressive component of liturgical song:

> We gather at Mass that we may hear and express our faith again . . . and, by expressing it, renew and deepen it.
>
> People in love make signs of love, not only to express their love but also to deepen it. Love never expressed dies. Christians' love for Christ and for one another and Christians' faith in Christ and in one another must be expressed in the signs and symbols of celebration or they will die.[81]

Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith.

The section entitled "Music Serves the Expression of Faith" is the most developed attempt to build a rationale for liturgical song. Its function is "ministerial."

> Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively.[82]

Concerns about expressing that faith with unfamiliar or challenging texts like the psalms is repeated from some of the USCCB documents discussed above.

A defining item in *Music in Catholic Worship* is its development of a "threefold judgment" to evaluate the suitability of liturgical music. The three judgments are: musical, liturgical, and pastoral.

On the musical judgment: musicians are urged to find or create music that is "technically, aesthetically, and expressively good."[83] In finding such music, it is not ruled out that the traditional propers might be suitable, though it suggests that they may not be practical: "They must find practical means of preserving and using our rich heritage of Latin chants and motets."[84]

On the liturgical judgment: speaking of the texts, *Music in Catholic Worship* recalls *Sacrosanctum Concilium*'s requirement that texts be in conformity with Catholic doctrine and are drawn primarily from scripture and liturgical sources. The liturgical judgment also requires that musical settings reflect a certain hierarchy of importance of the elements of the Mass.

The pastoral judgment asks the question, "Does music in the celebration enable these people to express their faith, in this place, in this age, in this culture?"[85] There is much emphasis on meeting the assembly's need for music that allows them to participate.

---

[81]Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1983), ¶1, 4.

[82]Ibid., ¶23.

[83]Ibid., ¶25.

[84]Ibid., ¶27.

[85]Ibid., ¶39.

This narrowness of the pastoral perspective put forth may be *Music in Catholic Worship*'s weakest point. A pastoral perspective does not consider only how well the faithful are expressing themselves in the liturgy. A pastor must consider how well the faithful are being formed by the liturgy. The formative aspect of liturgical song is not considered, and is surely an important pastoral matter.

> 60. The two processional chants—the entrance song and the communion song—are very important for creating and sustaining an awareness of community. Proper antiphons are given to be used with appropriate psalm verses. These may be replaced by the chants of the *Simple Gradual*, by other psalms and antiphons, or by other fitting songs.
>
> 61. The entrance song should create an atmosphere of celebration. It helps put the assembly in the proper frame of mind for listening to the Word of God. It helps people to become conscious of themselves as a worshiping community. The choice of texts for the entrance song should not conflict with these purposes. In general, during the most important seasons of the Church year—Easter, Lent, Christmas, and Advent—it is preferable that most songs used at the entrance be seasonal in nature.
>
> 62. The communion song should foster a sense of unity. It should be simple and not demand great effort. It gives expression to the joy of unity in the body of Christ and the fulfillment of the mystery being celebrated. . . . In general, during the most important seasons of the Church year—Easter, Lent, Christmas, and Advent—it is preferable that most songs used at the communion be seasonal in nature. For the remainder of the Church year, however, topical songs may be used during the communion procession, provided these texts do not conflict with the paschal character of every Sunday.

The formative aspect of liturgical song is not considered, and is surely an important pastoral matter.

The offertory song is treated separately, under the heading "Supplementary Songs," which have "no specified texts."

> 71. The offertory song may accompany the procession and preparation of the gifts. It is not always necessary or desirable. . . . When song is used, it need not speak of bread and wine or offering. The proper function of this song is to accompany and celebrate the communal aspects of the procession. The text, therefore, can be any appropriate song of praise or of rejoicing in keeping with the season. The antiphons of the Roman Gradual, not included in the new Roman Missal, may be used with psalm verses. Instrumental interludes can effectively accompany the procession and preparation of the gifts and thus keep this part of the Mass in proper perspective relative to the Eucharistic prayer which follows.

2.7 *The Sacramentary: Foreword* (1974)

The cause of the proper chants was not helped much by the Foreword to the *Sacramentary*. The description of the entrance antiphons makes them seem like anachronistic baggage:

> Entrance Antiphon: Although the *Sacramentary* is a book of presidential prayers sung or spoken by the priest, for the sake of completeness, this edition does contain the brief sung antiphons for the entrance and communion processions. These are printed in smaller type in order to indicate that they are not ordinarily said by the priest and indeed are not parts of a sacramentary.[86]

Next it is stated in surprisingly frank language that the use of proper antiphons is unlikely, anyway:

> The General Instruction takes for granted that there will be singing at the entrance of the priest and other ministers. . . . When the antiphons are set to music, they may be used for this purpose (i.e., as refrains to psalms). Ordinarily, however, it is expected that full use will be made of the decision to employ appropriate substitutes sung by the assembly with a cantor or choir. For the United States, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has given the criteria for texts to be sung as entrance songs.[87]

The texts intended to be sung must always be consistent with Catholic teaching.

Essentially the same is said for the communion antiphon.

2.8 Composers of Liturgical Music (1980): An Afterword to the Foreword

Concerns began to be raised about the content of the texts that had replaced the propers in common use. The advice given in *Music in Catholic Worship* to aid in the selection of hymns had concentrated on their suitability to express what was happening at a given point in the liturgy, at times influenced by the liturgical season. It is unfortunate the bishops at that point in time did not give examples or commission a set of liturgical hymns or even poems that would establish a reference for the content of such hymns. In "Composers of Liturgical Music," the bishops caution:

> For texts not prescribed by the rites such as texts for songs, greater freedom is enjoyed by composers. Even here, however, composers need to select texts that truly express the faith of the Church, that are theologically accurate and liturgically correct.[88]

Commenting on "Composers of Liturgical Music," McManus recalls that *Sacrosanctum concilium,* ¶121 says "The texts intended to be sung must always be consistent with Catholic teaching; indeed, they should be chiefly drawn from Holy Scripture and from liturgical sources." McManus faults the bishops for not re-emphasizing in their statement to composers the need for the primacy of scriptural content:

> In the intervening period, this particular exhortation of the council had not always been heard. . . . One omission from the statement is the specific directive of the Constitution on the Liturgy [*Sacrosanctum Concilium* ¶121]. This not only speaks of the

[86]Bishops' Committee, "*The Sacramentary:* Forward," in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 153.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Bishops' Committee, "Composers of Liturgical Music," in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 214.

> doctrinal integrity of the texts to which music is set, but proposes biblical and liturgical sources of inspiration for new texts, such as hymns and responsorial music. Such a directive need not be a constraint upon composers. Already, some American composers have turned to New Testament texts for use in liturgical music, including texts that are themselves understood to have origins in early liturgical practice.[89]

2.9 *Varietates Legitimae*: A Turn in the Tide

The substitution of hymns for propers had been going on throughout the world since the Second Vatican Council, as this was seen as an appropriate form of inculturating the liturgy in different places. Concerns in this regard prompted the Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy *Varietates Legitimae,* on inculturation and the Roman liturgy. A key statement notes that sung texts in particular have a significant impact on the formation of the faithful:

> It is important to note that a text which is sung is more deeply engraved in the memory than when it is read, which means that it is necessary to be demanding about the biblical and liturgical inspiration and the literary quality of texts which are meant to be sung.[90]

The American bishops' concern for the content of the proper-substitutes remained present but did not seem to call for any measures to be taken, judging from a Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy policy statement issued in 1996. It repeats a line from the 1980 letter to composers reminding them that the texts should express the faith of the church and be theologically accurate and liturgically correct. Yet it also states that: "No official approbation is required for hymns, songs, and acclamations written for the assembly, provided they are not sung settings of the liturgical texts of the Order of Mass."[91] But in Spanish-speaking sectors, some interest must have been present in the processional chants, given that a particular translation was indicated at this time: "When they are biblical texts, the Opening and Communion Antiphons in the Spanish Language Sacramentary are taken from the twenty-fifth edition of the Latin-American Bible."[92]

The substitution of hymns for propers had been going on throughout the world since the Second Vatican Council.

2.10 *Liturgiam Authenticam*

Prompted by a variety of issues, including translation and inculturation, a Fifth Instruction for the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Liturgiam Authenticam*, was issued

[89]McManus, *Thirty Years,* 212.

[90]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Varietates Legitimae:* Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy, March 29, 1994, ¶40 <http://www.adoremus.org/doc_inculturation.html>

[91]National Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, *Newsletter,* XXXIII (Jan–Feb 1997), 5.

[92]Bishops' Committee, *Newsletter,* XXXIII (Nov. 1997), 47n.

in 2001. It challenged some of the developments that had taken place since the council, and showed a great concern for all texts, including those sung as processional songs. It approaches inculturation from a different and more cautious perspective, asserting that the Roman Rite is a "precious example and an instrument of true inculturation" and "marked by a signal capacity for assimilating into itself spoken and sung texts, gestures and rites derived from the customs and the genius of diverse nations and particular Churches."[93] The customization of the liturgy through inculturation must be limited by the universality of the liturgy. The "Roman Missal . . . will thus continue to be maintained as an outstanding sign and instrument of the integrity and unity of the Roman Rite."[94]

Speaking of texts first generally, then addressing sung texts in particular, this document speaks more of the formative effect of liturgical text than the expressive character much emphasized in *Music in Catholic Worship*:

> 19. The words of the Sacred Scriptures, as well as the other words spoken in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of the Sacraments, are not intended primarily to be a sort of mirror of the interior dispositions of the faithful; rather, they express truths that transcend the limits of time and space. Indeed, by means of these words God speaks continually with the Spouse of his beloved Son, the Holy Spirit leads the Christian faithful into all truth and causes the word of Christ to dwell abundantly within them.
>
> 61. Texts that are intended to be sung are particularly important because they convey to the faithful a sense of the solemnity of the celebration, and manifest unity in faith and charity by means of a union of voices. . . . The texts for singing that are composed originally in the vernacular language would best be drawn from Sacred Scripture or from the liturgical patrimony.

Sung texts and liturgical hymns have a particular importance and efficacy.

Further on, *Liturgiam Authenticam* redresses the difficulty noted in the discussion above of the first GIRM, which seemed to rank the importance of the processional chants quite low in importance and unrelated to the proclamation of the word:

> 108. Sung texts and liturgical hymns have a particular importance and efficacy. Especially on Sunday, the "Day of the Lord," the singing of the faithful gathered for the celebration of Holy Mass, no less than the prayers, the readings and the homily, express in an authentic way the message of the Liturgy while fostering a sense of common faith and communion in charity. If they are used widely by the faithful, they should remain relatively fixed so that confusion among the people may be

[93]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Liturgiam Authenticam*: Fifth Instruction for the Right Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, March 28, 2001, ¶5 <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20010507_liturgiam-authenticam_en.html>

[94]Ibid., 4.

> avoided. Within five years from the publication of this Instruction, the Conferences of Bishops, necessarily in collaboration with the national and diocesan Commissions and with other experts, shall provide for the publication of a directory or repertory of texts intended for liturgical singing. This document shall be transmitted for the necessary *recognitio* to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

The suggestion that the sung texts be "relatively fixed" is not an instruction to return to the use of proper texts only, but indicates a turn back towards the kind of stable body of scripturally-based song so well exemplified by the proper chants.

2.11 Response to *Liturgiam Authenticam*

The new GIRM would soon reflect the principles found in *Liturgiam Authenticam* for the benefit of the universal church, though it took some time to prepare the American translation. Within a year of the release of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, however, the USCCB noted that the substitutes for proper chants would be regulated by the episcopacy:

> The chant or song at the entrance of Mass (GIRM, no. 48, USA) or during the reception of Holy Communion (GIRM, no. 87, USA) may, as a third option, be taken from a collection of psalms and antiphons, approved by the USCCB or the Diocesan Bishop.[95]

The Music and Liturgy Subcommittee noted at its meeting on June 21, 2003:

> The subcommittee has completed initial research and is beginning a first draft of a Directory of Music for use in the Liturgy in accord with the instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*, ¶108: "Within five years from the publication of this Instruction, the Conferences of Bishops, necessarily in collaboration with the national and diocesan commissions and with other experts, shall provide for the publication of a directory or repertory of texts intended for liturgical singing." After the directory has been completed and approved by the Committee on the Liturgy, it will be presented for consideration by the full body of Bishops. The Directory will eventually require approval by two-thirds of the Latin Bishops of the USCCB and subsequent confirmation by the Holy See.[96]

The suggestion that the sung texts be "relatively fixed" is not an instruction to return to the use of proper texts only.

Pope John Paul II, in his "chirograph" marking the one hundredth anniversary of Pius X's motu proprio, asks the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to "increase

[95]Bishops' Committee, *Newsletter,* XXXVIII (July 2002), 83.

[96]Ibid., XXXIX (Dec. 2003), 52.

its attention" in matters of liturgical music, saying he is "confident that the bishops' conferences will carefully examine texts destined for liturgical chant."[97]

2.12 The Revised *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (English translation)

In the new *General Instruction*, there were not many changes to the sections concerned with the processional chants, but the instructions were made slightly more explicit. Some additions reflect a general coordination of liturgical sources, much as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Code of Canon Law*, and some ritual books were slightly revised so that changes in one source could be found in other documents so affected. Here we might particularly note that in the discussion of the choice of parts to be sung, a reference is added to Gregorian chant, drawing from *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶116, and *Musicam Sacram* ¶30:

> 41. All other things being equal, Gregorian chant holds pride of 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.[98]

Of particular note are the additions to the instructions concerning substitution of the proper chants:

> 48. . . . In the dioceses of the United States of America there are four options for the Entrance Chant: (1) the antiphon from the *Roman* Missal or the Psalm from the Roman Gradual as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the Simple Gradual; (3) a song from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including Psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) a suitable liturgical song similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.

In the new General Instruction*, there were not many changes to the sections concerned with the processional chants.*

Regarding the offertory, the following paragraph is added, replacing the instruction that the presentation chant is omitted if not sung:

> 74. . . . Singing may always accompany the rite at the offertory, even when there is no procession with the gifts.

The communion chant instructions mirror those of the introit:

---

[97]Pope John Paul II, "Sacred Music in the Church Today," Nov 22, 2003, published in *Origins,* CNS Documentary Service, 33, no. 35 (Feb 12, 2004), 620.

[98]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, tr. International Commission on English in the Liturgy. adapted for the United States (Washington D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003).

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

2.13 *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

Lest there be any concern that the practice of substituting hymns for the propers was in jeopardy, *Redemptionis Sacramentum* upholds the freedom given in making substitutions for the propers. In speaking of the success of the liturgical renewal in fostering participation, it notes:

> For promoting and elucidating active participation, the recent renewal of the liturgical books . . . fostered acclamations of the people, responses, psalmody, antiphons and canticles. . . . In addition, ample flexibility is given for appropriate creativity. . . . In the songs, the melodies, the choice of prayers and readings. . . there is ample possibility for introducing into each celebration a certain variety by which the riches of the liturgical tradition will also be more clearly evident, and so, in keeping with pastoral requirements, the celebration will be carefully imbued with those particular features that will foster the recollection of the participants.[99]

2.14 Summary

This section examined the changes to the status of the proper processional chants resulting from the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. It has been seen that this change in status has its origin in a key principal of the liturgical reform—the call to greater active participation of the faithful. A theology of singing can be seen in the conciliar documents which was furthered in the American church by documents such as *Music in Catholic Worship*. This theology of liturgical singing put a heavy emphasis on the need for the assembly to express its experience while accompanying liturgical activities. Guidelines have consistently been in place to recommend that hymn texts are scripturally founded and theologically correct; however, these guidelines have not been widely emphasized or enforced until recently.

Guidelines have consistently been in place to recommend that hymn texts are scripturally founded and theologicall correct.

[99]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, 39, *Origins*, 33 no. 47 (May 6, 2004), 802–822 <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/letters/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20031203_musica-sacra_en.html>

Of particular note is the concern that scripturally-based songs, and psalms in particular, would have posed problems for fostering the participation of the faithful in liturgical singing. It speaks of the faithful as if they had been alienated from scripture, which was true in some ways. Without regular participation in a vernacular liturgy of the Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours, personal piety found nourishment in popular devotions. It is no wonder that some of the first vernacular hymns imported into the liturgy came from these devotions. There is a call to open up the scriptures to the people, yet at the same time, objections to tying hymn texts to this purpose. Ironically, this environment of scriptural alienation was the polar opposite of the conditions under which the singing of processional chants at the liturgy first flourished, influenced by the popularity of psalms sung at the Liturgy of the Hours.

A desire is evident to return to a stable body of liturgical hymns.

Attention has returned to the content of hymns sung at the liturgy, with a renewed emphasis on the need for hymns based on scripture and liturgical sources, recognizing the power that liturgical song has to help the Christian grow in faith through sung expressions of that faith. The theological correctness of hymn texts is therefore to be subject to greater scrutiny and official approval. A desire is evident to return to a stable body of liturgical hymns, however without completely returning to a strictly-scheduled system of proper chants.

3. ANALYSES

3.1 Themes of the Developing Hymnology

The preceding chronology of documents—from conciliar and post-conciliar curial sources and from the Bishops' Conference—shows that several themes emerged as liturgical theologians reflected on liturgical music in general, and particularly on what should be sung at the points in the liturgy traditionally served by the introit, offertory, and communion chants. This section will identify some major themes, then provide a context to understand the discussion by looking at liturgical singing in general, then look at the role of singing the psalms in particular.

To begin, a quotation which represents a traditional understanding of the role of the processional chants at the onset of the debate: the propers were said to serve the purpose of accompanying ceremonial actions and to provide inspiration to the faithful; the brevity of the texts was key: "The concentration of the hearer's attention on as few thoughts as possible together with the repetition of those same thoughts should stimulate meditation."[100] The understanding of the assembly as individuals who hear and meditate on the sung text would clearly not get very far in the debate driven by an explosive thrust toward full, conscious, and active participation.

The *function* of any and every part of the liturgy was revisited and measured by the criterion of participation. A spokesman for this approach is Bernard Huibers, who writes in *The Performing Audience:*

[100]Gottfried Göller, "The Structure of the Missa Cantata in the Roman Liturgy," in *Sacred Music and Liturgy Reform after Vatican II: Proceedings of the Fifth International Church Music Congress, Chicago–Milwaukee, August 21–28, 1966,* ed. Johannes Overath (Rome: Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae, 1969), p. 129.

> And so, the question of the function of the music at every point in the liturgy is now a prime one, and the criterion for the making of that music is now changed. It is no longer to accompany prescribed actions and to interpret prescribed texts. The new criterion, I believe, is this: will this music, used here in this service, invite, promote, and (musically) compel the active participation of the people? That is now the prime consideration.[101]

Huibers' writing reveals an undercurrent in the thought of the post-conciliar period which may also have worked against attempts to work with the propers at all. He reacts very strongly against a rigid structure of prescribed texts or songs: "Music. . . has at times served as idol. Here I would include: holding immovably to a fixed order of songs or to a stereotyped performance of an ordinary; use of a meaningless proper, vernacular and all."[102] Change was everywhere; everything was in flux:

> Liturgy has now entered upon a continuing process of self-renewal quite incompatible with fixed prescriptions like "at this point, this person or group will sing exactly this selection." No, neither the composer nor the choir nor the people will hereafter find a rite to which the music must relate just so, in which its function is, once for all, defined, established, fixed.[103]

While indeed a good case could be made to reject a rigidity against which it would be a sin to transgress, in Huibers' world where everything needs the freedom to evolve as functions change, there is little room for regulation. The admonition to ensure that texts are drawn chiefly from scripture and from the liturgical sources (*Sacrosanctum Concilium,* ¶121 *et al.*) would find little sympathy in such an environment, especially liturgical sources such as the propers that were seen as vestiges of an overly-regulated past. Huibers' school of thought, with its reaction against the rubricism of the past, is underscored by his discussion of the Roman suppression of Gallican and German innovations over the centuries. Now everything is innovation.

Radical individualism is too readily blamed for all the ills of our time.

The general individualism of the twentieth century may well have been another underlying cultural factor which would have influenced the development away from the common texts provided by the propers. Radical individualism is too readily blamed for all the ills of our time, but it has found an ecclesial expression in the "congregationalism" which characterizes the church in many places today. To some extent, reflection on the role of the assembly at the liturgy put such an emphasis on the particular assembly that the universality of the liturgy had much less relevance. Consider Lucien Deiss' reasoning as he explores the function of the entrance procession:

> In the entrance procession, the liturgical community organizes itself hierarchically and becomes an epiphany of Christ. In its heart, the heart of the Church beats. This

[101]Bernard Huibers, *The Performing Audience: Six and a Half Essays on Music and Song in Liturgy,* 2nd ed., tr. Ray Noll et al. (Cincinnati: North American Liturgy Resources, 1974), p. 69.

[102]Ibid., 109.

[103]Ibid., 68.

> assembly is not a part that, when joined to thousands of other parts, makes up the people of God. The Church is not a mosaic of individual assemblies. In each particular assembly the fullness of the Church's mystery is incarnated.[104]

The ability of the propers to unite the entire church in its song would not figure prominently in the prevailing school of thought as the liturgical moments they supported would be re-examined in functional terms, particularly in the function of expressing and realizing the unity of the actively participating assembly. Another quote from Deiss reveals the overriding emphasis placed on the assembly, almost as a challenge to the clericalism of the past. This quote is also interesting in that it indicates and addresses a practical problem that had arisen from the practice of substituting a strophic hymn for the introit. Should all the verses be sung, or should the hymn stop when the presider arrives at the chair?: "It was not a question in the past; it was regulated by the rubrics. The entrance song lasted the length of time it took to sing or intone the official text. But today, such a rubrical approach has been superseded."

Questions have been raised about limiting hymnody to scriptural texts.

Today some think that the entrance song should last for as long as it takes the priest to reach the altar. "In any case, it is over when the priest arrives at his chair."[105] But such a judgment reveals a strictly clerical vision of the liturgy. It is not for the community to regulate itself according to what its presider does, but rather for the presider—who is at the service of the community—to regulate his own actions in accord with those of the community. The celebration is the act of the whole community, of which the priest is a part.

> To remain liturgically authentic, we must affirm that the entrance song performs a ministerial function, that is, all the time it takes for the community to gather spiritually as one and acclaim Christ. If a single verse is sufficient, a single verse should be sung. If five or six are needed, even if the priest has only two steps to take to arrive at the altar, five or six should be sung—whatever time it takes to create a celebrating community.[106]

Thus, it was against this backdrop of liberation from rigid control and the ability of the particular assembly to express itself through its participation that a functional approach to singing at the entrance, offertory, and communion emerged. Bearing these themes in mind, there are some questions that may perhaps be more fundamental than the expression of the assembly's state of being at particular moments in the liturgy.

3.2 Psalms versus Other Texts

How important are biblical texts as a source of hymns, particularly the Psalms? Should hymn texts be restricted to them; based on them; loosely modeled on them or inspired by them; or have any connection to them at all? Questions have been raised about limiting hymnody to scriptural texts,

[104]Deiss, *Visions,* 121.

[105]See A. Rozier, *Eglise qui chante*, 79–80 (1967), 27.

[106]Deiss, *Visions,* 123.

with psalms being singled out as particularly problematic. An understanding of the underlying issues in these questions will help our discussion of the usefulness of a renewed appreciation for the propers.

As the National Conference of Catholic Bishops considered music at the liturgy in 1967, the psalms seemed to be rather discouraged as the basis of liturgical hymnody:

> The liturgy, by its nature, normally presupposes a minimum of biblical culture and a fairly solid commitment of living faith. Often enough, these conditions are not present. The assembly or many of its members are still in need of evangelization. The liturgy which is not meant to be a tool of evangelization, is forced into a missionary role. In these conditions, the music problem is complex. On the one hand, music can serve as a bridge to faith, and therefore, greater liberty in the selection and use of musical materials may be called for. On the other hand, certain songs normally called for in the climate of faith (e.g., psalms and religious songs), lacking such a climate, may create problems rather than solve them.[107]

Psalmody's overwhelming prominence in the liturgy grew as a corrective to the heretical hymns of gnostics and others.

Thus at the time of the implementation of the liturgical reform, there seemed to be little encouragement to use proper texts, which were based on psalms and scripture, as models for hymns. Opinions varied as to the degree which texts should conform to scripture. Bernard Huibers recommended that hymn texts should be biblical, but he describes this to mean biblically-inspired, with contemporary meaning, not merely a quotation; they should be "human," poetic, but not melodramatic.[108]

A particularly strong advocate for newly-composed texts is Lucien Deiss. He notes that psalmody's overwhelming prominence in the liturgy grew as a corrective to the heretical hymns of gnostics and others. Yet composers have always been writing new hymns:

> The patristic and medieval periods have left us with some 30,000 hymns. This shows us that each age sang of Christ in its own particular way and spirit, each showing a different image of Jesus. Each age thus paid him its "tribute of praise." Our age must also not fail to do its duty.[109]

Yet is this a fair parallel to our time, when the psalms have been eclipsed in favor of non-scriptural texts? However Deiss came up with the figure of 30,000, one would have to ask, how many of these were for the Roman Eucharist, how many were for use in the Liturgy of the Hours? How many were tropes based largely on scripture, and how many others steeped in the scriptural imagery known to monastic communities fed weekly by the entire psalter? It is one thing to compose new texts in such an environment, and another to allow texts to emerge at will from a culture where one cannot presuppose

[107]Bishops' Committee, "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations," November 1967 in McManus, *Thirty Years,* 100–1.

[108]Huibers, *Performing Audience,* 38.

[109]Deiss, *Visions*, 125.

"a minimum of biblical culture and a fairly solid commitment of living faith." For these composers of the past, there was never a danger that psalms would virtually disappear in the hymnody of the liturgy.

Deiss continues:

> The diversity of tradition contains a rich teaching. The question is not whether we should take psalm texts or other biblical texts or ancient or modern ecclesiastical texts. That question resolves itself before the priority of ministerial function: we must take—or invent—the text that is best for the celebrating community, the text that is the most joyful way for the community to enter into the celebration. We need popular and vibrant texts, without theological or metaphysical complexity, that reflect the splendor of the Word. [110]

Note that the balance between expressive and formational elements in Deiss' analysis leans heavily toward the former. The hymns should primarily express the mood of the assembly. If there is little regard for the formational aspect of hymn singing, naturally there is little call for "theological or metaphysical complexity." Yet Deiss recognizes the need for "quality repertoire" which can only be built up over time. He discourages attempts to make official lists of appropriate hymns, since this would be an artificial attempt to speed up a process that will take a long time. "Undoubtedly, at the present time we need a great deal of patience"[111] he aptly notes.

Yet the very example Deiss gives to justify the creation of new texts runs counter to the freedom he seems to espouse. He notes that the fifth-century hymn *Salve sancta parens* appears to be the melodic source of the introit *Ecce advenit* of Epiphany. At some point, a new set of words was composed for the ancient melody. He concludes, "it would therefore be in full conformity with tradition not to simply take up the ancient texts again but to compose new texts." Yet the text of *Ecce advenit* is drawn from Malachi, Chronicles, and Psalm 71. The very example he proposes is one where a non-scriptural text has been replaced by a scripture-based antiphon; the "newly-composed" text would have been not freely-composed, and is in fact more scriptural than the original.[112]

In a further argument in favor of the need for new texts, and against the use of psalms exclusively as processional songs, Deiss argues:

> Some communities use the psalms exclusively for processionals: there is a psalm for the entrance song, a psalm for the preparation of the gifts procession, and a psalm for the communion procession, without counting the responsorial psalm. Such a multiplication, which fails to register the unique function and meaning of each song in the celebration, is the surest way of devaluing the psalms, in general, and the responsorial psalm, the most important psalm of the Mass, in particular.[113]

---

[110]Ibid..

[111]Ibid., 126.

[112][Deiss's example does not work in any case, since the fifth-century text was not applied to the introit melody of *Ecce advenit* until the eleventh century. The autor's criticism, however, stands. Ed.]

[113]Ibid., 131.

Yet what Deiss derides is exactly what the church proposes in the *Graduale Simplex*. He feels that each song must somehow express ("register") its function; presumably themes appropriate to moments such as gathering, preparing gifts, and communing.

Another voice strongly calling for songs which express the nature of the gathered assembly, and against restricting liturgical hymnody to psalms is that of Miriam Terese Winter:

> The 150 psalms of the psalter are paradigmatic examples, illustrations of how we live life in the presence of God. The psalms are historic treasures, both inspired and inspiring. If we really cherish their content, we must allow ourselves to be inspired to do as the psalmists did, to sing songs of faith and thanks and trust arising out of our own life settings. We must be preoccupied less with reproducing precisely approved syllables and more with discerning the presence in our midst. To enflesh God's word anew in our times is to affirm God-with-us always. This is the privilege and the duty of those who proclaim an incarnate God. To limit the community of faith to received texts only is to miss their essential meaning and to condition the impact of grace. The psalms are indeed extraordinary examples of song poems and prayers from the past, but to restrict our rituals essentially to past paradigm is to relegate the Spirit to history. Is the age of revelation really over, or have we simply stopped up our ears, hardened our hearts, and settled for another people's songs?[114]

The renewed liturgy is shot through with the evocative expressions of the psalms.

Yet how are we to be inspired by those very psalms without singing them? How is any one assembly to be challenged to go beyond the limited way it can "enflesh God's word anew?" What will prevent us from singing only the songs we want to sing?

Other voices in the debate about what is to be sung in the liturgy have argued for a renewed appreciation for the psalms. Perhaps this is a reaction against the general state of hymnody; after so many years of unbridled freedom, any given assembly has unprecedented freedom in the choice of hymns. It would come as a shock to abandon all current repertoire in favor of psalms only, but some now believe that the time is ripe for a rediscovery of the psalms through their liturgical use:

> In short, the use of psalms in whole or in the form of substantial excerpts in the rites produced since Vatican II is altogether new to most Roman Catholics. For this reason, they cannot be expected to embrace wholeheartedly these suddenly provided prayers, even in vernacular form. Rather, they must be gradually re-introduced to the world of the psalter with its strong and affective language and symbols. The psalms as the poetic distillation of the message of scripture appear in the recent renewal as the very language of the liturgy, a language of the passionate regard and fidelity between God and God's privileged people. The renewed liturgy is shot through with the evocative

[114]Miriam Terese Winter, "The Sound of People Singing," *Liturgy,* 3 (1983), 21.

> expressions of the psalms because there is not now, nor has there ever been, a more appropriate language of God's revealed word.[115]

We must become again steeped in that "language of God's revealed word" before we can truly enflesh his word, not merely our own words; and that can only come about through appropriating that language in the liturgy, particularly through singing, given the power of song to inscribe the Word in our hearts.

An interesting twist to this theme of "whose word do we sing?" comes from Margaret Daly-Denton, in her article "Psalmody as Word of Christ." She notes that Jesus was considered the "new David," and so psalms in the early church were naturally seen to be about Jesus. It is telling that "the Psalter is the most frequently cited book of the Hebrew Scriptures in writings of the early church."[116] The psalter was a "model and quarry" for the composition of prayers,[117] an idea which should inspire contemporary hymnody.

The psalter was a "model and quarry" for the composition of prayers.

Daly-Denton bemoans the current state of hymnody at the Eucharist, particularly with the number of hymns that seem more concerned with commenting on the action taking place than "quarrying" scripture, and gives examples of antiphons from the *Graduale* that might even challenge us by their unexpected lack of obvious connection with the liturgical action. "Something valuable has been lost—the breadth, the biblical richness, the capacity of an unexpected entrance or communion antiphon to challenge and stretch us beyond our presuppositions."[118]

Perhaps the most eloquent and prominent proponent of the use of psalms in the liturgy is Josef Gelineau. Here he develops a prioritization of sources for hymnody, wherein he praises the psalms above all, and other scriptural sources as primary:

> 1. First of all come the inspired hymns: psalms and biblical canticles. More than any merely human compositions they transmit revelation because they are God's word. As a lyrical resume of the entire history of salvation, of prophetical preaching and sentences of Wisdom, they are the key to biblical language. The mysteries of our Savior are expressed prophetically by their imagery and phrases in a specially excellent way. It is impossible for the faithful to acquire any deep knowledge of Scripture or to participate fully in the Church's liturgical prayer unless they become familiar with a certain number of psalms by singing them in their own tongue. Just as the preaching at catechetical reunions, convert classes, missionary gatherings, bible vigils, etc., ought to be based on the reading of Holy Scripture, so also the meditative singing, and the prayer of praise which enable the "good news" to be inwardly grasped, ought to be based on the inspired psalms and canticles, and thus the word of God is received and given back, is heard and answered. To achieve this end, an exact and faithful

[115]James M. Schellman, "Notes on a Liturgical Psalter," *Liturgy,* 3 (1983), 30.

[116]Daly-Denton, "Psalmody," 77.

[117]Ibid., 79.

[118]Ibid., 80.

> translation has to be used, one, moreover, which respects not only the meaning of the words and imagery of the text, but also its poetic literary genre and most especially its rhythmo-melodic character. . . .
>
> 2. Corresponding to the prophetic songs of the Old Testament are those which sing of fulfillment in the New. Every Sunday at the beginning to Mass, Christians of the Byzantine rite sing the Beatitudes. How could the baptized, who often know other texts by heart, be ignorant of the summary of the New Law which our Lord Himself formulated for us in harmonious sentences? In every language the disciples of Christ ought to be able to sing the Beatitudes by heart.
>
> There are other texts in the New Testament, especially the Magnificat and certain hymns from St. Paul or from the Apocalypse, which deserve to win a place among items sung by the faithful. We might also include some passages of the Gospel, like the parables, whose oral structure suggests rhythmo-melodism. The task of memorizing and assimilating these sacred texts is made much easier by singing them; this might be done by using the responsorial form, which is fundamental and universal, or by direct recitative, whether individual or collective.[119]

The task of memorizing and assimilating these sacred texts is made much easier by singing them.

Commenting on the sudden importation of vernacular hymns into the liturgy, mainly those written for devotions pre-Vatican II, he writes:

> We must not be surprised that in this sphere, unlike that of liturgical chants, the past has little or nothing of use to offer us. It is very rare that the texts of bygone days correspond exactly with present needs. Their content is often of little value, and their inspiration insufficiently biblical, liturgical and theological.[120]

One wonders what he would have to say about the corpus of hymnody since then which has replaced the psalms Gelineau so fondly praises.

Lucien Deiss argues well on both sides of this issue. He speaks firmly in favor of newly-composed hymns in general, but just as assertively argues for the use of a psalm during the communion procession:

> As regards the communion processional, the majority of parish communities (all of them?) choose to sing a song, whether as a processional or as a hymn after communion.
>
> This practice, insofar as it eliminates the psalm as a communion song, does not seem a good practice; it leads to a certain impoverishment in the expression of the faith. Just as the best bread in the world cannot replace the Eucharistic bread, the bread of heaven, so the most beautiful song in all the world cannot replace the psalm, the Word of God.

---

[119]Joseph Gelineau, S.J., *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship: Principles, Laws, Applications* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1964) 185–7.

[120]Ibid., 204.

> It is true that these songs are often inspired by the Word of God. They reflect it, sometimes beautifully, yet always through the prism of their authors. This is true for all the texts composed for the liturgy. The question is always: Does a community prefer to thank God with human words rather than with the Word of God? To drink from the poet's cup or from the living spring of God's Word?[121]

It is interesting that Deiss has chosen to focus somewhat more on the formative aspect of community song at the Eucharist, rather than expressing the themes of unity and community which seem so common in today's communion hymnody. He speaks of the problem of "impoverishment in the expression of the faith" when psalms are substituted at this point in the rite. But is this not a major issue with hymnody in general, not only at communion? Does a typical parish's repertoire of gathering hymns and preparation hymns not reflect the same impoverishment in the expression of faith?

It seems fitting to take one final quote from Deiss in this section, because he is sincerely trying to seek a balanced answer to the psalm versus hymn question:

> It is not possible, however, to omit all the hymns at every celebration. This would be like taking away all the statues and all the stained glass from a church. Human beings do not live by clear concepts alone. They also need a minimum of beauty. Their souls are nourished by poetry and music. The hymn enriches the equilibrium between the different musical forms of the songs used in the Mass. A celebration in which all the songs were psalms accompanied by an antiphon would die of boredom. It would be just as insufferable if all the songs were hymns. The excess of lyricism would unbalance the equilibrium just as much as its total absence.[122]

It would be just as insufferable if all the songs were hymns.

His point about balance is well taken. But why does he see such a gulf between psalm and hymn, as if every psalm had to be responsorial, and strophic hymns were never metrical psalms? Perhaps it is our own lack of imagination in ways of setting the psalms in different styles that has furthered an avoidance of the psalms. Indeed, what if the psalm translations (or paraphrases) were exquisitely phrased; if the refrains were lyrical, the accompaniments splendid, the choral harmonies majestic? Some contemporary hymn writers have done excellent work casting the psalms as strophic hymns, or with lively refrains which make the responsorial form anything but boring.

One has to wonder: if we had harnessed the creative energy of our composers to do justice to the psalms at the outset of the reform, instead of opening the door wide to just about any hymn, wouldn't that appreciation of the psalms we want to foster be so much greater today?

---

[121]Deiss, *Visions,* 159.

[122]Ibid., 203.

3.3 The Effects of Singing Liturgical Songs

Throughout the discussion of the "developing hymnology" that was identified above, some reference was made to the "expressive" versus the "formative" aspects of hymnody. This dynamic has been developed by Edward Schaefer in an article calling for the balancing of these elements in liturgical music. Simply put, he states "expression concerns what we are; formation concerns what we aspire to be."[123] As the hymnology in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents developed, there clearly seemed to be an emphasis on songs expressing the assembly's state of unity or joy, or expressing the action of the liturgy in song. However, as Schaefer points out, "Music integrates both the expressive and the formative. It has the power to express who we are, and the ability to shape us into something beyond our present state."[124] While emphasizing the expressive side of liturgical music, the formative aspect seems to have been inadequately considered.

This section, investigates the formative effect of the assembly's song, bearing in mind the questions raised above in the discussion of psalm texts versus hymn texts from varied traditions and sources. What are the formative aspects of religious song in general, and of singing the psalms in particular?

The most general effect of singing a congregational song is said to be the unity it achieves in the assembly. There is a sacramental character to this action; singing both expresses and achieves, at least exteriorly, the unity of the Body of Christ, when all present are engaged in singing the same words and the same melodies at the same time. Both the expressive and formative elements of the liturgy are present here; the assembly expresses its unity and voices are molded into unity in song.

This reasoning focuses on the expressive and formative effects on the assembly as a whole. But it seems to gloss over the fact that an assembly is necessarily composed of individuals, who are going to be formed at an individual level through that same song. That individual formation can and should indeed be profound. At this point in our exploration of the formative element of liturgical song, we should consider what has been said about the formative effect of singing on the individual.

Gelineau writes of the "function" of popular religious song (here called the *cantique*), which is in fact an effect of singing:

> The first role of the cantique is that of evangelization. Singing is an admirable way of making known the "good news" and of aiding the assimilation of Christian doctrine. By means of number and cadence, the word which imparts the message becomes more penetrating and pleasing. By the melos which accompanies it, the word softens the hearts and charms the minds which it is to impregnate. By the repetition of rhythmo-melodic sentences it becomes engraved on the memory. Thus it acquires practical value for Christian living and motivating power for Christian action.[125]

[123]Edward E. Schaefer, "The Expressive and Formative Roles of Music: A Search for Balance in Liturgical Reform," *Antiphon,* 7, no. 2 (2002), 22.

[124]Ibid.

[125]Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments,* 184.

Gelineau notes that these "functions" are "analogous to those of the sung items of the liturgy."[126] I would emphasize that the effects on the singer listed above are going to be the same whether or not the singing takes place in the liturgy or in a prayer meeting. The functions may be analogous, to use Gelineau's terms, but the effects will be the same. Singing at the liturgy impresses the gospel on the singer's memory and heart (learning "by heart" in the fullest sense), enables assimilation of the gospel, and thus singing has a "practical value," fostering in the singer a base of gospel charity overflowing into everyday life.

Gelineau notes the power of both singing and repetition of that sung text to influence a believer's life. Texts become "engraved" on the memory, and the heart formed by those texts finds in them the Spirit's prompts to live a holy and charitable life. Indeed, then, should we not consider those texts carefully, to ensure a healthy balance of scripture and doctrine that is comprehensive of the Christian faith?

Through liturgical recitation, doctrinal affirmations become professions of faith.

The mechanism of responsorial psalmody in particular lends itself to this blend of memorization and meditation. A brief refrain allows a certain concentration on a text within a text (i.e. refrain within the psalm, and refrain within the context of other scriptures of the Mass). Repetition aids memorization, and meditation on the text can take place during the cantor or choir's verses, and if interiorized sufficiently, meditation can continue throughout the celebration and into daily life. St. John Chrysostom recognized the formational power of the responsorial form of psalm singing:

> Do not sing the refrain out of routine, but take it as a staff for the journey. Each verse can teach us much wisdom. . . . I exhort you therefore not to leave here empty handed but to gather these refrains like pearls, to keep them ever with you to meditate on them, to sing them all to your friends and wives. And if disquiet invades your soul, if covetousness, anger or any other passion upsets your soul, sing them with perseverance. In this way we shall enjoy great peace in this life, and in the next eternal blessedness through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ.[127]

Cyprian Vagaggini, discussing the use of scripture in the liturgy, describes the interiorization of recited text as a kind of anamnetic experience (though he does not use the term specifically). He maintains that the experience of the text is made real in the lives of those who recite them in the liturgy; reciting them allows us not only to feel the sentiments of those who wrote them in the first place, but to see how they are happening in our own lives here and now. He asserts that through liturgical recitation (seeming to include both sung and spoken recitation), doctrinal affirmations become personal professions of faith, moral exhortations become internalized; prophecies are applied to us here and now; historical persons and events happen to us here and now.[128] A fine testimony to this effect is given by John Cassian, and sums up the formational goal of liturgical song:

---

[126]Ibid.

[127]Lancelot Sheppard, *The New Liturgy* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1970), p. 79.

[128]Cyprian Vagaggini, O.S.B., *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*, tr. L. J. Doyle and W. A. Jurgens (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1976), p. 465.

> Thriving ever more on their nourishment, he will make his own all the sentiments of the psalms, and he will begin to sing them in such a way, with deep compunction of heart, that he will utter them not as compositions of the prophet, but as coming forth from himself, as his very own prayer. Or at least he will believe that they have been made his own, composed, as it were, with him in mind, recognizing that that which is stated in them did not take place only at an earlier time, for the prophet or in the prophet, but that it take place and is fulfilled every day and in himself. In fact, only then do the Scriptures open themselves to us, only then are they clearly manifest to us, with so to speak, their veins and marrow exposed, when our own experience not only perceives the meaning of Scripture but anticipates it, and the significance of the words is made clear to us, not by means of learned explanations thereof, but through the verification supplied by experience itself.
>
> Then, while we renew in ourselves the same interior affection in which each psalm was sung or written, we will ourselves become like their authors and will anticipate the meaning of the psalms rather than follow after it. That is to say, knowing that to which the words vitally correspond before they are conceptually formed, when we come to meditate on them we will be reminded, so to speak, of what has happened to us, or is happening in us every day. While we sing we recall the effects of our negligence and the battles we have won; the benefits that Divine Providence has granted us and the losses that we have suffered at the instigation of the enemy; the injuries because of fickle and too easy forgetfulness, the consequences of human fragility, and the deceptions of our blind ignorance. All these things we shall indeed find expressed in the psalms, so much so that by viewing therein, as in a mirror of finest quality, all that has befallen us, we shall recognize it all the more perfectly. And this will take place in such a way that, having been taught by experience, we will recognize these things not as having heard them, but by touching them as something actually present; and we will utter them from the interior affection of the heart not as if from memory but as if implanted in us by their very nature, understanding their meaning not by the reading of the text but under the guidance of antecedent experience.[129]

Singing aids the memorization and interiorization of scripture and dogma.

3.4 Formational Effects of Proper Chants

The above discussion has noted that singing aids the memorization and interiorization of scripture and dogma, fostering virtue as scripture is recalled and applied in daily life, and creating an anamnetic experience of the events of salvation history. Given that singing has a profound formational effect on the assembly as a body and as individuals, we turn to a more specific question: what formational benefits might proper chants have for the faithful, in addition to the general effects of singing described above?

[129]John Cassian, "On Perfect Prayer," *Conferences* (Ch 11), in Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions,* 718.

Over the centuries, musical settings have changed, proper texts have been treated polyphonically in the genres of different ages, and sung to metrical melodies, but the formative power of the texts has been great in every age. Gottfried Göller, who champions traditional music, admits that despite the musical genre, the consistency of the texts of liturgical music is critical to an appreciation of salvation history:

> Thus *musica sacra* created for the Mass possesses a special characteristic that is not found in other types of music: the same texts are set to music again and again, independent of temporal changes. . . . But the retention of the same texts has a great influence on the way in which church music is listened to. The basic themes of salvation history are well known to even the less educated faithful because of their constant repetition in the liturgy. Compared with the opera, it is not necessary in the celebration of the liturgy for the average Christian to begin anew each time with a text unfamiliar to him. . . . Therefore, progress in church music does not consist primarily in the choice of new texts, but rather in new compositions using the stylistic techniques of the contemporary age. . . . With reference to the church music used in our day, this means that a large percentage of the People of God is really cut off from an appreciation of so much that they hear because of the abundance of forms and styles both old and new.[130]

Proper texts have been treated polyphonically in the genres of different ages.

Though Göller is arguing for the retention of Gregorian propers sung by the choir, one could posit that while hearing the same texts is highly formational, singing them is even more so. He argues in particular in favor of the brevity of proper texts, compared with an entire psalm: "The concentration of the hearer's attention on as few thoughts as possible together with the repetition of those same thoughts should stimulate meditation."[131] The chants act as a contrast to the longer texts of the readings, and are thus easily digestible. And indeed, if listening stimulates meditation (as he puts it), then singing might even further memorization and interiorization of a text.

Some examples will illustrate the effects of proper texts sung on specific days. Vagaggini provides an illustration of the theological connections made by a proper introit in a very specific context:

> In Wisdom 10:20–21 one reads of the Hebrews after the crossing of the Red Sea: "Together they praised Your conquering hand, O Lord, because wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb and made eloquent the tongue of infants." And Psalm 97 begins thus: "Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done wonderful things." Here the power of God shown in freeing His people from their enemies in a marvelous victory is exalted.

[130]Göller, "Missa Cantata," 119n.

[131]Ibid., 129.

> In the liturgy these texts for centuries were read alongside each other in the introit of the Mass of Thursday after Easter and were evidently referred to the neophytes baptized on Holy Saturday. (Since the promulgation of the Pauline Roman Missal, this introit consists only of the first passage, Wis. 10:20–21). In this context it is not hard to understand how the power of God, praised in these texts according to the sense which they had for the contemporaries, here takes on an immensely more profound sense. For that same power of God which was manifested in freeing His people, first from the Egyptians and then from their other enemies, is manifested in a manner still more surprising in the marvels of baptism, which is, in a more sublime way, for individual men and for the Church, what the liberation from Egypt and from other temporal enemies was for the Hebrews.[132]

A proper text and its intrinsic connection with a particular day is seen most vividly on solemn feasts.

This is a fine example of what Margaret Daly-Denton calls "intertextual dialogue" between the Psalms and the New Testament, but with a twist. In her analysis, "the New Testament antiphon would function as a lens through which the psalm could be viewed on a particular Christian feast or in a particular Christian season."[133] In Vagaggini's example, texts from Wisdom and the Psalms "dialogue" with the liturgical context of the neophytes in the early Easter season.

A proper text and its intrinsic connection with a particular day is seen most vividly on solemn feasts of the church. Irwin takes up this issue in a discussion of the use of hymns as substitutes for propers, a practice he derides:

> Thus, at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the entrance antiphon given in the Missal adapted from Galatians 6:14: "We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." should be noted with care. This antiphon introduces what is celebrated during the whole Easter triduum because it emphasizes Christ's suffering and death; it does not merely note the institution of the Eucharist or any other allied Eucharistic themes. If a hymn is used here (granting that this would not be our preference) that concerns only the Eucharist then one could argue that the depth of the meaning of the original antiphon is lost.[134]
>
> After the homily attention shifts from the hearing of the Scripture texts to appropriating the Word in the rest of the liturgy to follow, especially at the Eucharist. . . . To paraphrase the gospel in a hymn at the presentation of the gifts in the Roman Eucharistic rite is, in our opinion, to skew the inherent logic of how the homily and intercessions really are hinges that move from scriptural Word to altar and the rite of presenting gifts focuses on the gifts themselves, on the Eucharistic anaphora and on

[132]Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions,* 467.

[133]Daly-Denton, "Psalmody," 80.

[134]Kevin W. Irwin, *Context and Text: Method in Liturgical Theology* (Collegeville: Pueblo, 1994), p. 242.

> the transformation of gifts to come. At this point to return to a retelling of the gospel is to destroy the inherent theological logic of the Eucharistic liturgy.[135]

Above and beyond the effects of singing proper texts, we might also consider the effects of "encounter" with the liturgy. An introit confronts us with scripture as the celebration begins. A proper introit makes a bold statement that "this particular Sunday has arrived," more so than "I have arrived at this particular Sunday." There is an element of objectivity here that merits consideration. McKinnon eloquently puts it thus:

> There is nothing quite as proper as a proper chant; it has a concreteness about it that grants it a degree of fixity beyond that of the more malleable prayer sets and more easily reassigned readings. Consider an introit like the first Sunday of Advent's *Ad te levavi*; it stands out in the imagination like a sculptured object, causing us to identify the entire liturgy of Sunday with it. Indeed eventually the Sundays of the year come to be referred to by their introits.[136]

McKinnon's thinking serves to remind us of the objective qualities of the liturgy, which are sometimes overshadowed by an emphasis on the gathering of a particular community to celebrate its own Eucharist. While it is important that a worshiping community form itself and express itself as the Body of Christ, experiencing the unity of that body in one voice, it should not lose touch with the universal character of a feast of the church. The proper antiphons unite the church both locally and universally, a particularly fitting gesture at the opening of a celebration.

There is nothing quite as proper as a proper chant.

At present, we are so used to substituting hymns for these chants, on the grounds that the Gregorian propers are considered unusable for some due to language and genre. But what if vernacular propers were available in accessible settings? What effect would this have on our assemblies?

When the American bishops compiled their proposed translation and revision of the second edition of the sacramentary, a companion antiphonary was also proposed, providing versions of the proper antiphons that would lend themselves to musical settings (presumably more so that the terse ICEL translations of the first edition), hoping to inspire composers to use the proper texts. Commenting on this proposed antiphonary, Daly-Denton speculates on the impact of a renewed use of propers:

> Above all, the Antiphonary will challenge us with the "given-ness" of liturgy, its character as a received way of worshiping God. On the Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, for example, the Antiphonary will propose to use something, perhaps, unsettlingly different to our usual "Gathering song": "If you lay bare our guilt, who could endure it? But you are full of mercy, Lord God of Israel."

We may find this choice unappealing at first. We have, after all, come to regard Psalm (129) 130 as a "penitential" psalm suitable for reconciliation services, Lent, etc. Yet this psalm is sung at Vespers every

[135]Ibid.

[136]McKinnon, *Advent Project,* 103.

evening during the Octave of Christmas in joyful celebration of God's mercy to humankind, as shown in the birth of Jesus. This is just one example of how the

> antiphonary will challenge us to look at the psalms from another angle, that of the weekly Easter of God's people, the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. This particular antiphon may well alert us to an important aspect of the Eucharist, neglected perhaps in much modern eucharistic hymnody—that Jesus' body broken and blood shed are "for the forgiveness of sins."[137]

3.5 From Formation to Mystical Encounter

Finally, having considered some of the formative effects of the use of proper texts as liturgical hymns, a venture briefly into the mystical may serve as a reminder that the goal of any "formative effect" is nothing less than the union of heart and soul with Almighty God. Inspiration might be found in this account of a mystical episode of St. Gertrude, triggered by the introit *Esto mihi* on Quinquagesima Sunday:

In the Mass, when Gertrude, by means of the introit, called upon the Lord, the Lord applied those words of the introit to Himself, as if those words might seem to pertain specifically to Him because of the offense which He was receiving in those days. And He said to Gertrude: "You, O my beloved, would be My protectress, proposing that if you were able to do it, you would protect Me from the offenses which are committed against Me especially in these days. Hunted down by the others and seeking a place to rest, I find refuge in you."

> Then Gertrude, constraining Him with all her powers, endeavored to draw Him into her intimate confidence. And behold, suddenly she found herself so strongly withdrawn from her bodily sense and interiorly united to God that she could no longer conform herself to the movements of the community when it sat or when it stood. Observed by one of the sisters, she realized that she had not been doing what the others did. And she prayed to the Lord to be able, by His help, to control her body so that no singularity would be noticed. The Lord replied to her; "Leave your affection with Me, that love of yours, so that it may take your place at my side, and then you may take care to have control of your body."[138]

3.6 How the Propers Might Serve as Models for Liturgical Hymnody

"Can the past give us some indications of what would be fitting for the present?" asks Lucien Deiss in developing his vision of new music for the liturgy.[139] Indeed, we are called to look not only

[137]Daly-Denton, "Psalmody," 82–83.

[138]Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions,* 778.

[139]Deiss, *Visions,* 123.

for indications, but to mine the liturgical sources as a basis for contemporary hymnody. This section, considers ways in which the propers might be mined for inspiration.

3.6.1 A Model of Content

Given that the freedom exists to substitute other songs for the propers, yet aware of the concerns raised by the virtual disappearance of the propers and the questionable repertoire of hymns that have displaced them, it behooves us then to search for a template of sorts that can be applied to the repertoire of proper-substitutes; this template would allow for an appropriate variety in a new repertoire of liturgical song, yet would do for the liturgy and for the faithful what the propers have always done best, and lose none of the spiritual benefits of the traditional chants. We should note therefore the most noteworthy aspects of the proper repertoire. This would be entirely in the spirit of the instruction of *Sacrosanctum Concilium,* ¶121, to include "the liturgical sources" as a primary resource for new song.

It behooves us to search for a template that can be applied to the repertoire of proper-substitutes.

First and foremost, the propers exemplify the use of scripture as song. As Vaggagini points out:

> It can in fact be said that in the Roman liturgy the non-scriptural compositions are not only relatively few in number; as a rule, they do no more than coordinate, underline, and interpret with great sobriety the thoughts of the scriptural passages, which always occupy the principal place.[140]

The Psalms constitute a significant portion of the texts. For example, consider the forty-two introit refrains for the daily liturgies of Lent. Of these texts, thirty-seven are drawn from the Psalms. Of the twenty-one introits of the Easter season, eleven are drawn from the Psalms; in the Post-Pentecost period, seventeen are drawn from the Psalms, and the four remaining are from the Old Testament.[141]

At least half the introits, and in fact, half of all the proper texts (including graduals and alleluias) however, have undergone some textual adjustment, through careful editing and occasional paraphrasing of the scriptural text being quoted.[142] However, this editing or paraphrasing was often a "carefully crafted quasi libretto,"[143] adapting the text to a particular theme of the feast or season. Deiss takes this as a model for contemporary hymn-writing, where scripture is the principal source of texts, but adaptation meets the needs of the worshiping community:

> If the feast being celebrated possessed a strong liturgical "personality," the liturgy chose biblical texts that highlighted the mystery being celebrated. In the wonderful

[140]Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions,* 455.

[141]McKinnon, *Advent Project,* 103, 210.

[142]Ibid., 215.

[143]Ibid., 218.

introit for Christmas, the path toward the Lord's crib was easy to find when the community was able to sing the text of Isaiah 9:6:

> For a child has been born for us, a son given to us.

In several instances, tradition did not hesitate to adapt the text to the community, sometimes risking the possibility of dismissing its literal sense. The old introit for the Sunday of the Octave of Christmas is a well-known example:

> When peaceful silence lay over all, and night had run half of her swift course, your all-powerful word, O Lord, leaped down from heaven, from the royal throne.[144]

As a criticism of the inappropriate use of scripture in this introit, Deiss points out that the "literal" sense is the punishment of the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus. He sees this use of a text in a different context as "intolerable" because it dismisses the literal sense to use it as a Christmas text, and such a dismissal is unworthy of the Word of God, particularly in the liturgy. He laments that "It is regrettable that the new Missal has retained this text as the antiphon for the opening of the Mass of the Second Sunday after Christmas."[145] However, Deiss' criticism may have completely missed the point of the "intertextual dialogue" referred to by Daly-Denton above. Is not the awesome juxtaposition a greater sign of redemption?

The generous use of the Old Testament in the propers provides a model that has not been followed.

Furthermore, the generous use of the Old Testament in the propers provides a model that has not been followed, to our great disadvantage. Vagaggini places a high importance on the themes drawn out by these Old Testament texts, believing that the liturgy uses these texts to deepen our understanding of specific aspects of salvation history, namely:

(a) doctrinal affirmations about God, His nature and attributes; or about other things, especially about the relations between God and man;

(b) moral, juridical, liturgical precepts and admonitions;

(c) prophecies properly so called;

(d) historical persons, things, and events.[146]

In McKinnon's analysis of the offertory and communion antiphons for the post-Pentecost season, these very themes can be seen: "At the core of these chants . . . lies a rich theme made up of the related motifs of Old Testament sacrifice, the Temple of Jerusalem, harvest and communion."[147] These chants are *Sanctificavit Moyses* (the sacrifice of Moses), *Si ambulavero* (the temple), *Inmittet angelus* (verse "taste

[144]Deiss, *Visions,* 124.

[145]Ibid., 124n.

[146]Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions,* 465.

[147]McKinnon, *Advent Project,* 321.

and see"). The last three chants of this season form what he calls the "justice" set: "*Vir erat*, of course, depicting the ultimate example of the just man, Job, crying to the Lord in his misery; *De profundis*, where the just man cries out from the depths of his travail; and *Recordare mei*, where he asks the Lord to remember him."[148] Communion chants demonstrate the same thematic structure as the offertories: "sacrifice-eucharist" and "justice." Sacrifice, temple, harvest and eucharist are drawn together: "It is in the Old Testament temple that sacrifice is performed; it is the first fruits of the harvest that are sacrificed; and it is in the 'sacrifice' of the eucharist that a medieval Christian sees the fulfillment of these ancient religious practices and conceptions."[149] In a subsequent thematic set, the antiphons concern the righteous man appealing to God's justice in times of trial, as in the offertories.

Elsewhere in the liturgical year, in a playful use of "intertextual dialogue," the communions for the ember days make reference to the Jewish festival of Sukkoth, connecting September (the seventh month of the old calendar) with Tishri (seventh month of the Hebrew calendar), using the text from Leviticus, "Celebrate a festival on the seventh month" (Lev. 23:41).[150]

Thematically-related texts naturally appear in the Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter seasons, the "liturgically strong times." In ordinary time, Deiss notes that "the tradition was not very creative, and took refuge in the Psalter."[151] It seems that the authors of the proper texts were not as concerned as we seem to be today about tying every liturgy together with an overarching theme every Sunday. Rather, they simply allowed the psalms to speak their own universal themes of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, supplication, and so on. Yet even in Lent, a thematically strong season, there is a numerical progression through the Psalter in the communion chants. Psalms 1 through 26 are used sequentially from Ash Wednesday to the Friday before Palm Sunday.[152] Yet for certain occasions, the sequence is interrupted to accommodate five gospel-based antiphons. They may have been inserted to coincide with the scrutinies, which, as adult baptisms became less common, were moved to weekdays, where these antiphons are found. However, this theory does not explain why there are five rather than three such exceptions. McKinnon admits that there are other difficulties connecting these communions with the scrutinies, and suggest that they may have been included simply because these five gospel stories were the "five most attractive stories in the entire Lenten weekday evangeliary."[153] He notes that in the new lectionary, all five gospels have been moved to the Sundays of Lent.

The authors of the proper texts were not as concerned as we seem to be today about tying every liturgy together.

Communion antiphons from Easter to Pentecost week are derived from the gospel of the day or an epistle, though oddly enough not often from the epistle of the day. Of these twenty-one antiphons,

[148]Ibid., 322.

[149]Ibid., 343.

[150]Ibid., 144.

[151]Deiss, *Visions,* 21.

[152]McKinnon, *Advent Project,* 336.

[153]Ibid.

the last six stand out because they are gospel texts, but not from the gospel of the day. (They are in fact borrowed from the offices of Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday. In fact, around a quarter of all communion antiphons are borrowed from the liturgy of the hours.[154])

Thus, we can see there is a good intermixture of Old and New Testament texts in the propers, with a notably generous and inventive use of Old Testament texts. In this regard, the propers provide a wonderful model of inter-textual dialogue, something which remains largely unexplored in contemporary hymnody. The Old Testament as a source of hymn texts has likely been a victim of our general ignorance of the scriptures. We would do well to recover this aspect of the songs we sing at the liturgy, for where else would we have the opportunity to weave Old and New Testaments together as we might in carefully crafted liturgical songs?

3.6.2 A Model of Form

Beyond textual considerations, the propers provide a model *form* for the processional chants. The introduction of metrical hymns for the entrance procession, for example, creates a tension between form and function. If the purpose of the chant is largely to accompany the opening procession, what should we do when the procession is over, but the hymn isn't? Simply stopping a through-composed hymn can have unfortunate results, especially if the words are composed with a narrative or a logic which is incomplete until the final verse is sung. Yet standing through several verses after the presider has reached the chair seems to make the hymn a ritual element in itself, rather than something which is secondary to the liturgical movement it is supposed to accompany. Arguments have been made on both sides of this issue; Deiss, for example, (quoted in full in the previous section "Themes of the Developing Hymnody") based his rationale on the congregation's experience: the number of verses sung is determined by "whatever time it takes to create a celebrating community."[155] Yet it would be difficult to find a way of measuring the establishment of a celebrating community. While Deiss' intent to work from a community-based hymnology is a good one, one might argue that he is elevating a secondary (though entirely worthy) aspect of the introit above the more direct function of accompanying a procession. Irwin looks at the issue differently, understanding the form of the entrance rite as a contour or context which then requires an accompaniment; the context places limits upon the text (to use his terms). He finds that the responsorial structure of the propers is the ideal musical form for the processional chants:

The propers provide a model form *for the processional chants.*

> Their structure is a helpful accompaniment to the ritual of a procession, especially the entrance, for a number of reasons. First, the brevity of the antiphon (and also its derivation from the Scriptures) makes it something the assembly can sing without having to read from printed texts. The antiphonal nature of the introit enables the assembly to listen to the psalm verses while they watch the action of the entrance procession.

[154]Ibid., 341–2.

[155]Deiss, *Visions,* 123.

> The open-ended number of verses enables flexibility so that the amount of singing here is determined by how much music is required to accompany the processional movement. Once the ministers are in their places the introit can be concluded. To our way of thinking the *context* established (and establishes) the contours of the liturgical *text* used here.
>
> The introit is an open form . . . in the sense that the emphasis is on the text and accompanying music of the antiphon, not a fixed poetic text used in the hymn. It is "open" in the sense that the number of psalm verses can be adjusted during the liturgy itself. A hymn, or other "closed" form would require the singing of the whole poetic text to understand its full (theological) meaning. Hence, from the point of view of form we would argue that the hymn is not an appropriate form of music for the entrance.[156]

3.7 The *Graduale Simplex*: A Model of the Model

The *Graduale Simplex* was an attempt to provide an accessible repertoire of liturgical chant which was modeled on the *Graduale Romanum*, but composed of chants far less elaborate that those of the *Graduale Romanum.* The *Simplex* does not provide chants unique to every Sunday of the year, hence one might object to referring to its processional chants as "propers"; however, solemnities and major feasts have unique chants in the *Simplex*, and liturgical seasons have chants which are proper to the season. While these might be seen as "commons," along the lines of the Common of Saints, it could be said that the chants of the *Simplex* are not so much "commons" since they are proper to seasonal celebrations rather than non-seasonal feasts. There nature lies somewhere between the proper-common divide.

We can not ask the people to learn a set of songs which is completely new each Sunday and feast day.

The conciliar group charged with preparing the *Graduale Simplex* (group 25) based their work on the *Graduale Romanum*, but adapted texts as they felt necessary, and chose new texts "inspired by the same ideas of the liturgical season or feast."[157] They defended the use of the responsorial psalm form, noting that its use at Mass could be traced to the time of Ambrose and Augustine. There was criticism of its shift away from propers for every Sunday of the liturgical year, yet this was felt to be necessary to achieve congregational participation:

> If we want to lead the congregations and small choirs to the regular practice of the sung Mass, no other way is feasible. We cannot ask the people to learn a set of songs which, no matter how short and simple, is completely new each Sunday and feast day. The important thing, therefore, is that the chants maintain and underscore the concepts that inspire a season or feast rather than that the congregation be bound to a text proper to a particular melodic form with which it is closely connected.[158]

---

[156]Irwin, *Context and Text,* 239.

[157]Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975,* tr. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 894.

[158]Ibid., 895.

When *Musicam Sacram,* ¶32 was being debated, which opened the door for widespread substitution of hymns for the proper chants, some believed that the *Graduale Simplex* would eliminate this need.[159] However, the timing of the release of the *Simplex* may have rendered it ineffective. There was concern that it would render the chants of the *Graduale Romanum* obsolete in practice, if such simple chants were to have official status, and that its altered texts and simple chants did not merit any kind of official status.

Objections continued to delay publication until June of 1967. Those opposed to the *Graduale Simplex* wanted use of the book limited to strict situations, such as non-solemn Masses only, and it be allowed on an experimental basis only. Despite the objections, the book was printed by the Congregation of Rites on September 1, 1967. To appease the opposition, it was not designated a "typical edition"; however, the second edition was published on November 21, 1974, and labeled "second typical edition".[160] But by the time it was released as a "typical edition," the use of vernacular song had been well established, and no one was looking for limits to the freedom then being explored in the explosion of popular song for the liturgy. The *Graduale Simplex* was lost in the shuffle.

This was perhaps a most unfortunate turn of events in the musical development of the reformed liturgy. The *Graduale Simplex* provides an ideal model for a parish hymn book. The antiphons are drawn heavily from the scriptures, modeled on the principal source of the liturgical musical tradition (the *Graduale Romanum*). The balance between strictly proper chants for feast days and solemnities, and a manageable set of "seasonal propers" (two in Advent, two for Eastertime, eight for Ordinary Time), with thematic commons, constitutes a repertoire which could easily become familiar to an average parish, while providing some variety. The pre-eminence of responsorial psalmody, being most suited to the ritual form of a procession, is also something a general hymnbook would do well to model. The prominence given to the Psalms also meets the expectations of the reformed liturgy to mine the richness of scripture.

The pre-eminence of responsorial psalmody is something the general hymnbook would do well to model.

The *Graduale Simplex* as a "model of a model" is a concept worth exploring. It would allow a local church to go beyond simply looking at hymns one at a time and deciding if each hymn on its own met certain criteria for use at the liturgy. The *Simplex* challenges us to think in terms of the entire repertoire of parish hymnody, finding a balance throughout the repertoire which matches the thematic and seasonal distribution of hymns of the *Simplex*, itself a mirror of the repertoire of the complete *Graduale Romanum*. It can provide a model to move beyond theological correctness of individual hymns, to theological completeness of the hymn repertoire of local churches.

[159]Ibid., 903

[160]Ibid., 896.

3.9 Summary

A "developing hymnology" is evident in the conciliar and post-conciliar liturgical documents, wherein the function of any and every part of the liturgy is revisited and measured by the criterion of participation. The freedom given to substitute hymns for the proper chants of the introit, offertory, and communion generated a new repertoire of songs used in the liturgy. Composers of and commentators on liturgical music revelled in this new-found freedom, seeing the rigid structure of the propers as a constraint to be avoided, anachronistic now that change was the norm. Certain factors which influenced the developing hymnology and the repertoire of hymns composed were: a hesitation to give priority to the psalms, as it was felt that they were inaccessible to the faithful; an ecclesiology that emphasized the local assembly; and the need for that assembly to express itself through song.

Given that singing liturgical songs can have such a profound effect on the formation of the faithful, it is essential that the songs they sing have the content to live up to this formation, not merely express their experience of a particular liturgical moment.

Rising concern over the suitability of hymn texts has prompted a call for official reviews of texts.

The propers have an objectivity that can challenge us to move beyond our immediate experience in time and space. The "given-ness" of the liturgy can confront us with the same scriptural themes with which the universal church celebrates on any given day. The singing of timeless sentiments of a chosen people interiorizes and inscribes universal virtues in our hearts. The inter-textual dialogue found so often in the propers helps us encounter a richness of inter-testamental liturgical exegesis. This use of scripture should be a model for a corpus of hymns used to replace the propers. Hymn books modelled on the *Graduale Romanum* or *Graduale Simplex* would go a long way toward ensuring that an assembly was not bereft of the benefits derived from the use of the propers themselves.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Forty years have passed since *Musicam Sacram,* ¶32 *et al.* altered the "properness" of the proper chants for the entrance, offertory, and communion processions, introducing a diversity of hymnody into the liturgy on a scale unknown since the seventh century. Rising concern over the suitability of hymn texts has prompted a call for official reviews of texts and approval by episcopal conferences, recognizing that songs sung at the liturgy can contribute to formation of the faithful in an important way.

As the church undertakes a revision of its hymnody, what can be learned from the history of the propers that will guide the development of a fitting corpus of hymns for the liturgy?

4.1 Re-creating a Background of Psalmody

First, there are contrasting circumstances under which the two creative bursts of liturgical songwriting took place. In antiquity, the ubiquitous psalmody of the Liturgy of the Hours provided an intimate familiarity with the Psalms and their universal, inter-testamental themes. In the modern creative burst, we must admit that while scripture was not entirely alien to us, we were distanced from the intimacy with the songs of scripture which enabled the proper composers to make such wonderful use

of the Psalms. Fear of failure to promote active participation kept the Psalms at bay for a time. This discouragement of the Psalms may have been the right thing at the time in some quarters, but this disconnect must be recognized and challenged, because circumstances have changed. Through the revival of the responsorial psalm, in particular, the faithful have become more familiar with the Psalms, and for many, the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours in the vernacular has restored the Psalms to their place in the spiritual life of the church. Had this happened before *Musicam Sacram,* ¶32 came along, the same difficulties may not have been faced with hymn texts as we find at present.

However, it would be another mistake to assume that this familiarity with and love for the Psalms is what it should be. The failure to foster the praying of the hours in parishes needs to be addressed. The call to make better use of scriptural sources for hymns in general, and psalms in particular, needs to be accompanied by renewed efforts to establish the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours throughout the church.

4.2 Using the *Graduale Romanum* and the *Graduale Simplex* as Models

Just as the Liturgy of the Hours provides a "school of prayer," the corpus of chants in the *Graduale Romanum* and *Graduale Simplex* provide models of content for parish hymnody. Does not what Taft says about the Liturgy of the Hours apply to the proper repertoire: it is prayer which is traditional, biblical, and objective? On the last characteristic, he writes:

> How much penance, how much festivity, how much contrition, how much praise, how much petition and how much thanks should our prayer contain? It is all right there in the age-old pedagogy of the Church's offices. How much devotion to the Mother of God, how much fasting, how much attention to the saints, how much to the mysteries of Jesus' earthly life? The Divine Office with its seasonal and festive propers has it all. . . . For an objective ecclesial piety is not all penitential, not all Eucharistic nor all Marian nor all devotion to the passion. It is not just Christological nor just Trinitarian. It is a balanced synthesis of all this.[161]

The texts of the propers provide the most excellent models for a hymn repetoire.

Surely this could be said of the Propers of the Mass, and we should be able to say the same of whatever corpus of hymnody presumes to replace the propers, or we do ourselves a disservice. Indeed, while so much of the recent discussion has expressed concern with the texts of individual hymns, we need to move on to examine the complete repertoire of what is sung throughout the seasons of the year. It is not only what we are singing that is the problem, it is also what we are *not* singing. An examination of the content of a hymn book, or the parts thereof in regular use in a parish, diocese, or country, may well reveal that there are aspects of our faith that are never celebrated in song. For example, in promoting the use of scriptural sources for texts, we should also ensure that the vocabulary of sacraments and devotion is not absent. Again, the texts of the propers provide the most excellent models for a hymn repertoire which does justice to all aspects of our faith.

---

[161]Robert Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in the East and West*, 2nd ed., (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), p. 369.

4.3 Allowing Text and Melody to Transcend Genre

The proper texts have lent themselves to chant settings and to polyphonic settings. Texts have been respected yet accommodated to trends and styles of liturgical singing; the tropes of the Middle Ages are a fine example of a synthesis of old and new, the fruit of creative minds who forged something new, which was yet based on a solid understanding of the material at hand and accompanied by a solid theological and scriptural formation. These tropes might provide the best inspiration for composers who wish to find a contemporary expression of the proper processional chants (using the process of troping without necessarily using the medieval tropes *per se).*

It was hoped that simplified entrance and communion antiphons would inspire composers to write hymns based on those texts. However, it was left to chance and essentially did not happen. The models were too vague. Perhaps another "Advent Project" is in order. A body of composers could be commissioned by an episcopal conference to provide examples of contemporary hymnody which reflects the richness of the propers for a given season.

The fear of a negative impact on active participation might be addressed by a careful study of what exactly encourages participation in singing. Often it seems to come down to genre: some will only attend Masses with "traditional" music with organ and polyphonic choir; others will avoid this like the plague and attend only Masses with "contemporary" music, using primarily guitars and avoiding the organ. A set of proper texts and even melodies which could be shown to work well in different idioms would allow communities to sing the same proper songs, even if the rhythm and accompaniment needed to be stylistically adapted. Antiphons could be relatively similar, and verses could be done in whatever style of psalmody would be best suited to the traditional, contemporary, or ethnic musical style with which the assembly is most comfortable. Tietze[162] has shown us that this can be done with metrical psalm tunes; might someone demonstrate the same thing in, say, an Acadian folk idiom, or in the style of Taizé? Perhaps a metrical index to *Glory & Praise* might facilitate similar adaptations in a contemporary style.

It is hoped that simplified entrance and communion antiphone would inspire composers to write hymns based on those texts.

The modest success of *By Flowing Waters*[163] gives hope that chant will find a home again in average parishes, and the simplicity of the *Graduale Simplex* melodies, which have some universal musical gestures in common with folk music that seems to transcend cultural boundaries, might provide a melodic basis for contemporary settings, linking old and new.

This new "Advent Project" should not discount the use of the Gregorian propers themselves. We will always need them as a point of reference, and the chanted Latin liturgy would never be complete without them. Using the Latin antiphon to frame the metrical psalm, for example, is one way to incorporate old and new into our current celebration of the liturgy.

---

[162]Christoph Tietze, *Hymn Introits for the Liturgical Year* (Mundelein: Hillenbrand, 2005).

[163]Paul F. Ford, *By Flowing Waters* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999).

4.4 Final Synthesis

The proper chants for the entrance, offertory, and communion processions have proven to be a wealth of musical and spiritual inspiration for the church through the centuries. *Musicam Sacram,* ¶32 fixed open a door that had been slightly ajar, and the whirlwind that passed through swept away what should have been a model for the corpus of hymnody that replaced these processional chants. Issues which were a concern at the time of that initial replacement have changed, and the situation needs to be revisited. The re-creation of a worthy corpus of hymnody will be different, and more deliberate, now that assemblies are used to robust congregational singing and are more biblically literate. However, the bases of Christian song need to continue to be nurtured, with the inspired songs of the Word of God being sung morning and evening taking the appreciation of the Psalms back to the level of our forebears. The proper processional chants need to serve as models for the hymns, aiming to sing what we believe as completely in our new hymns as the church has done for centuries in the propers.

Issues which were a concern at the time of the initial replacement have changed, and the situation needs to be revisited.

4.5. Epilogue

The Gregorian propers are the ultimate foundation of all that has been said here, and I have become increasingly enamoured of these proper chants of the Mass, realizing the limitation of the use of hymns in their place. However, musicians and priests who face the pastoral reality of most parish music programs, where hymnody is much beloved and the concept of propers is utterly alien, may find that the most effective approach to turn the tide may often involve working with the best of what is in use, and gradually steering into unfamiliar waters.

The long history of the proper chants, and the circumstances that eclipsed them at the Second Vatican Council described above, will hopefully provide useful justification for directing the musical life of a parish back in the direction of these hallowed chants.

COMMENTARY

The Singing Priest

By Jeffrey Tucker

Everyone knows that the Catholic people in the pews have a singing problem. For the most part, they don't dig it. It doesn't matter how many lectures they are given, how much a cantor waves his or her arms, how loudly the organist or pianist plays; the singing in a Catholic parish, even when it does take place, is seriously subdued when compared with just about any Protestant congregation.

I'm not among those who think that this issue is the central issue of the liturgy that needs to be fixed. For my own part, I do find it annoying that when I visit a new parish and sing out, I get stares and glares from people as if to say: "Hey, we don't do that here!" But in the end, what matters about Mass is not that everyone belts out songs at the top of their voices, but rather that the interior work of prayer and contemplation is accomplished.

In regard to singing, a much more serious problem concerns the celebrant. His parts should be sung, as often as possible and as much as possible. On this front, we have a serious problem. When his parts are not sung, the people do not sing the dialogues ("The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.") even though they are the easiest parts and traditionally have been sung. When the dialogues are spoken, the liturgical structure is destabilized because the only singing then comes from the choir, and that reinforces the sense that the music is merely for background effect or for entertainment and performance.

In 2007, the USCCB released document called *Sing to the Lord*. It says the following about the need for the priest to sing:

> The importance of the priest's participation in the Liturgy, especially by singing, cannot be overemphasized. The priest sings the presidential prayers and dialogues of the Liturgy according to his capabilities, and he encourages sung participation in the Liturgy by his own example, joining in the congregational song. . . .
>
> Seminaries and other programs of priestly formation should train priests to sing with confidence and to chant those parts of the Mass assigned to them. Those priests who are capable should be trained in the practice of chanting the Gospel on more solemn occasions when a deacon may not be present. At the very least, all priests should be comfortable singing those parts of the Eucharistic Prayer that are assigned to them for which musical notation is provided in the Roman Missal.[1]

The language is stilted and unimaginative but the message is correct. And yet, once again, the exhortation has no effect. Why? Here is my theory. Our culture treats the notion of "singing" as something done by specialists, entertainers, recording artists, pop superstars, and all for the sake of delighting the audience. American Idol. That is what singing is. The priest notes the contrast between himself and these people and comes to the inevitable conclusion: "I'm not a singer. Believe me, you don't want to hear my voice. I can't carry so much as a simple tune. Therefore I will not sing the liturgy. I'm sparing you the pain."

Jeffrey Tucker is the director of publications for the CMAA and the author of *Sing Like A Catholic*. He is also managing editor of *Sacred Music* can be reached at sacredmusic@musicasacra.com.

[1]United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord* (Washington, DC: 2007), ¶19–20.

You know what's awful? This whole mistaken view of what singing is tends to be reinforced by pop music at Mass. Pop music encourages the performance ethos. Music with a beat reminds us of recording stars. Jazzy chords and head-swaying sensibilities push the idea that singing is only for those who want to be loved and admired for their great talents. Music groups who do this kind of music—and this is the mainstay of the music pushed by mainstream publishers—are only entrenching the non-involvement of the priest in singing.

There is a reason that only a few bishops in the entire national conference of the United States sing their parts. It's because they are very much used to pop music and the pop ethos dominating the Mass. In the same way that a very talkative person won't let you get a word in, this style of music doesn't like the celebrant get a note in. This music crowds out simple chanting. The celebrant comes to believe that there is no place for him in the production of the liturgy.

There ought to be a different word for what the priest is actually asked to do. He is not being asked to become a star or to entertain anyone. He is not seeking a channel on Pandora or looking to sell downloads on iTunes. He is not trying to win a competition. In the church's conception of the singing a priest does, there is not a very great distance in physics between speaking and singing. His singing really amounts to speaking with a slightly different kind of voice, one with a pitch that takes it off the ground and out of the realm of conversation and puts the words in flight. It is a simple shift that makes a gigantic difference in how the words come across.

I've personally never heard of a priest who cannot, in fact, sing all the parts he is being asked to sing. I would go further and say that the priest who is most qualified to do this is precisely the one who thinks that he cannot do it. That implies a certain humility, which is exactly what is required to sing at liturgy.

The first step, which any priest can start this week, is to find any pitch and enunciate the words of the Mass on that one pitch rather than simply speak it. Maintain the rhythm of speaking. There is no need to work on changing pitches at the start. Just pick one random note that feels good and proceed with the text of the Mass. This one step makes him a singing priest. He has already fulfilled the goal of the church in doing this one thing.

I know a priest who went all the way through seminary and his first years of priesthood without singing a single note. He was convinced that he could not. He was sure that was "not a singer" and thus refused to even try. There was no negotiation on this matter. It was just the way things were.

Then one day he was given the above advice—that singing the liturgy isn't like singing Broadway or trying out at an audition. One note will suffice at the beginning. He finally tried it at liturgy. Guess what? He was perfectly brilliant. He was fantastic. The words were very clear and the text was ennobled and elevated. He loved it because he could immediately tell what taking this one action did to the liturgy. It changed the whole environment to become more solemn and beautiful. The choir and the people were all inspired. And this was just the beginning. Over the coming weeks, he tried more and more. Pretty soon he had overcome all his fears and he redefined himself and his skills.

The Mass where I heard him do this was otherwise filled with chant from the schola and the people, who chanted the Mass parts without accompaniment. This made his first attempt easy to integrate into the existing aesthetic structure. It might have been different if the choir was singing jazz or rock or had some amazing soloist seeking to delight an audience. Sensing that a simple chant would be out of place, he might never have attempted it.

So the solution is that the choir should chant. That's what gives the priest the confidence to attempt to sing his parts. And he can. He really can. Then we will start to see a change in the people in the pews as they join in the song.

NEWS

Gregorian Chant and Modern Composition for the Catholic Liturgy: Charles Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique* as Guide

Symposium Synopsis by Jennifer Donelson

During February 1–3, 2012, performers and scholars from across the U.S. and five foreign countries gathered for a symposium on Charles Tournemire, sponsored by the Church Music Association of America, Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the Church of the Epiphany in South Miami, Florida, and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter.

A new initiative of the CMAA and organized by Dr. Jennifer Donelson of Nova Southeastern University, the aim of the conference was to explore the aesthetic, liturgical, and compositional principles of Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique*, the implications of the work for modern compositions inspired by Gregorian chant, and the role of modern compositions and the organ in the Catholic liturgy.

Charles Tournemire

The opening recital of the conference was given at the Church of the Epiphany in South Miami by Mr. Jonathan Ryan, First Prize Winner of the Jordan International Organ Competition and Visiting Artist at St. James Cathedral (Episcopal) in Chicago. In the model of recitals given by Tournemire himself, Ryan presented a delightful snapshot of the modal and chorale-based tradition to which Tournemire claimed not only compositional lineage, but also artistic allegiance. Versets by de Grigny and excerpts from Frescobaldi's *Fiori Musicali* opened the program in a colorful display of the variety offered by the liturgical organ repertoire of the seventeenth century. The *Paraphrase-Carillon* from Tournemire's office from *L'Orgue Mystique* for the Assumption marked the center place in the program, and the melodic wealth of Tournemire's use of Marian chants was highlighted by Ryan's supple sense of rhythm and phrasing. Three tune-based compositions by Buxtehude (Chorale Prelude on *Komm Heiliger Geist*), Sweelinck (Variations on *Puer nobis nascitur*) and Böhm (Chorale Prelude on *Vater Unser im Himmelreich*) followed, themselves an ingenious Trinitarian prelude to the masterpiece of Trinitarian symbolism, the "St. Anne" Prelude and Fugue by Bach. Ryan's exhilarating playing highlighted the immense diversity of sound in the organ repertoire to which Tournemire was drawn, and the fantastic possibilities opened up when playing the repertoire on an organ of symphonic scope.

The second day of the conference was marked by a series of recitals at the Church of the Epiphany in South Miami, organized with the generous assistance and support of Mr. Thomas Schuster, Director

Dr. Jennifer Donelson is an assistant professor of music at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale. She serves as the associate managing editor of *Sacred Music* and can be reached at jd1120@nova.edu.

of Music and Organist at Epiphany. The first recital of the day was given by Dr. Crista Miller of the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston who framed her program with two works by Naji Hakim (*Embrace of Fire* and *Te Deum*). The ferocity and rhythmic vigor of Miller's playing of the Hakim was contrasted with the sweet repose offered by the interior of the program—the sublime *Soleil du Soir* from Langlais' 1983 *Cinq Soleils* and Tournemire's anguished and introspective office from *L'Orgue Mystique* for the Feast of the Sacred Heart. A recital of three of Tournemire's *pièces terminales* from *L'Orgue Mystique* followed, given by Mr. Richard Spotts of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. The recital, just one of a multiple-year series given by Spotts which will culminate in the playing of the complete *L'Orgue Mystique*, featured the offices of Pentecost, the Third Sunday after Epiphany, and the feast of St. Joseph. Spotts' sensitive and thoughtful playing reflected the depth of his understanding of the repertoire offered by his extensive work with the cycle.

The third program in the morning series of recitals was a premiere of two works by Christendom College (Front Royal, Virginia) faculty member Dr. Kurt Poterack, played by Mr. Matthew Steynor of Trinity Cathedral (Episcopal) in Miami. Both of the works featured the prominent use of Gregorian chants, the *Eucharistic Suite* employing *Ave verum*, *Jesu dulcis memoria*, and *Ecce panis angelorum*, and his *Meditation on the Glorious Mysteries* employing mostly the introits of the Masses connected to each mystery. Of special note were the variations on *Ecce panis angelorum* in the final movement of the *Eucharistic Suite*—a delightfully varied salute to both the tune and the French twentieth century tradition of chant-based compositions.

The morning concluded with an insightful lecture by Dr. Ann Labounsky of Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), replete with pertinent quotes from Tournemire's own writings on improvisation, especially from his *Précis d'éxécution de registration et d'improvisation à l'orgue*. Labounsky's lecture focused on Tournemire's work as a teacher of improvisation. Her recital of works by Franck, Tournemire, and Langlais following the lecture illustrated Tournemire's work specifically within the Ste. Clotilde tradition as well as her own astute and well-deserved place in this lineage of players and pedagogues.

The first recital of the afternoon was an ambitious and imaginative project—a chronology of improvisations in the French style by Dr. Bogusław Raba (Musicology University of Wrocław, Poland). Working his way from Titelouze and a Baroque organ Mass through the styles of Franck, Widor, Guilmant, and Vierne to those of Duruflé, Dupré, Langlais, and Messiaen, Raba displayed an impressive command of disparate styles. The afternoon concluded with a pair of recitals featuring new music, the first given by Timothy Tikker (University of Michigan) which included one of his compositions based on the *Te Deum*, along with three pieces from Tournemire's offices for Epiphany, the Third Sunday of Advent, and the Most Holy Trinity. Tikker's perceptive handling of the diversity of texture and structural flow of Tournemire's works, especially of the *Toccata* from Third Sunday of Advent, was particularly noteworthy. The second recital in the pair featured the *Hildegard Organ Cycle* by Frank Ferko and was performed by Dr. Chad Winterfeldt (Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota), assisted by Mrs. Lisa Knutson (Cathedral of St. Joseph, Sioux Falls) who sang the chants upon which the selected movements were based. The effect of the barrage of tone clusters in the fifth movement (*Places of Purification*) was profoundly striking when released into the reverberant acoustic at Epiphany at the conclusion of the movement, as was Winterfeldt's luminous registration of the fourth movement (*Articulation of the Body*).

The final recital of the evening was given by Dr. Ronald Prowse (Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit). His selections (Dupré's variation on *Ave maris stella* from his Op. 18 *Vêpres du commun des fêtes de la Sainte-Vierge*, Peeters *Toccata, Fugue and Hymn* on the same, and the *pièce terminale* of Tournemire's office for the Immaculate Conception) proved to be an outstanding preparation for the Mass of the Marian feast day which immediately followed, aided especially by Prowse's technically brilliant delivery of the Dupré, as well as a profoundly meditative performance of the Tournemire.

Thursday, February 2 concluded with a Solemn Pontifical Mass in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (*Missale Romanum* of 1962) celebrated by His Excellency, Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami,

the first such Mass celebrated in nearly 50 years in the Archdiocese of Miami. Organized through the generous efforts of Rev. Fr. Brian Austin (F.S.S.P.) and the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter working in conjunction with the Archdiocese, the Mass drew a crowd of approximately 1300 worshippers. The musical highlights of the Mass included Tournemire's office from *L'Orgue Mystique* for the day (*Purificatio B. Mariæ Virginis*), played by Mr. Thomas Shuster (Epiphany Church, South Miami) as well as a *Missa Brevis* by Zachary Wadsworth and a commissioned motet on the *Nunc dimittis* by Dr. Paul Weber, both performed by the Florida Schola Cantorum under the direction of Rev. Dr. Edward Schaefer. The Gregorian chant propers of the Mass were sung by a women's *schola cantorum*, consisting largely of nuns of the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary who form the schola cantorum at St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Miami, under the direction of Dr. Jennifer Donelson. The assistant clerics were Very Rev. Msgr. Andrew Wadsworth (Westminster, England), Rev. Fr. Guy Nicholls (Birmingham Oratory), Rev. Fr. Richard Vigoa, Very Rev. Fr. Christopher Marino, Rev. Fr. Joseph Fishwick, and Very Rev. Msgr. Jude O'Doherty (all of the Archdiocese of Miami), Rev. Fr. Christian Saenz (Society of Jesus, Antilles Province), Rev. Fr. James Fryar, Rev. Fr. Justin Nolan and Rev. Fr. Brian Austin (Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter). Servers and other ministers were drawn from Miami's St. John Vianney College Seminary, the Church of the Epiphany, and the Mission of Sts. Francis and Clare in Miami.

A complete video of the Mass, courtesy of the Fr. James Fryar (F.S.S.P.) can be viewed by visiting www.livemass.net and clicking on "Archived Events."

The events of Friday, February 3 took place in the Performing and Visual Arts Division at the main campus of Nova Southeastern University in Davie, Florida. The first panel of papers began with a presentation by Msgr. Andrew Wadsworth (Executive Director, ICEL) who drew upon magisterial documents, liturgical praxis, and first-hand experience to craft a snapshot of the role of the organ in liturgy:

> There is something about the sound of the organ—its ability to produce every dynamic level from inaudible to deafening, and every frequency from too low to hear to too high to hear, which gives it a cosmic character, and it is only really improvisation that can explore to the full the dimensions available in a particular space and for a particular liturgical moment. Such music is being created for that space, that organ and that liturgy in real time. An improvisation at the end of Mass in particular, can be seen as offering a response to the the liturgy on behalf of the people—a huge wordless but musical *Deo gratias*. Such moments, in the hands of a good player, give the organ an oratorical power—in a very real sense, it can preach to the people.

The presentation which followed, given by Rev. Dr. Edward Schaefer, drew together an enormous body of liturgical documents and organ repertoire from sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy, and seventeenth and eighteenth century France to examine the place of Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique* within the organ Mass tradition. Of particular note were Schaefer's speculations about the potential use of Tournemire's work at either low or high Mass, based on French liturgical practices immediately preceding the appearance of *L'Orgue Mystique*, as well as the observations of Tournemire students about his playing at the low Mass at Ste. Clotilde.

Dr. Susan Treacy's presentation on the role of Joseph Bonnet in the Gregorian revival in Paris was particularly useful in situating Tournemire's work in the broader context of sacred music revival in early twentieth century France (and Paris in particular). Also of great interest was her exploration of Bonnet's fascinating and far-reaching work as a whole, a little-explored topic, particularly in English-language scholarship. She drew together quotes from various writings of Bonnet, linking him in a vital way not only to the revival of chant at Solesmes, but also to the sacred music renewal happening in the U.S. through the hands of people like Mrs. Justine Ward.

The early morning session concluded with a rousing account of Dr. Robert Sutherland Lord's lifetime of experience with Tournemire's manuscripts, personal affects, and friendship with Mme. Tournemire. Scholars of Tournemire's *L'Orgue Mystique* are well-acquainted with Dr. Lord's work on the cycle, particularly his 1984 *Organ Yearbook* article on the work. Lord's as-of-yet uncompleted work which was the focus of his presentation, however, is the compilation of a catalogue for the 1300 page rough draft of *L'Orgue Mystique* left to the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* by Tournemire's student, Daniel-Lesur, a manuscript not included in Joel-Marie Fauquet's catalogue of Tournemire's works. His discussion of the manuscript explored its role as an important bridge between Tournemire's "plan" for *L'Orgue Mystique* and the final form of the work.

The second session of the morning began with a paper by Elisabeth Kappel (University of Music and Performing Arts, Graz, Austria) which documented Tournemire's methods for chant paraphrase in the first four movements of the offices of *L'Orgue Mystique* for the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, Christmas, Epiphany, and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, drawing together some general trends in Tournemire's methods.

The second paper of the session by Dr. Bogusław Raba (Musicology University, Wrocław, Poland) explored the harmonic language of *L'Orgue Mystique* as a whole, setting up a dialectic between pandiatonicism and chromaticism wherein pandiatonicism functions as a static and mystical element, and chromaticism serves as a dynamic and transformative language. Raba pointed to the synthesis arising from this dialectic as particularly suited towards a truly sacred music which is, by definition, both transcendental and immanent, eternal and temporal.

The presentation given by Timothy Tikker (University of Michigan) which followed was an exploration of performance practice issues connected with *L'Orgue Mystique*. Tikker's presentation focused on rhythmic elements, including the use of rubato and suppleness of phrasing in melodic lines. He presented a number of recording excerpts illustrative of Tournemire's own sense of rubato, as well as Tournemire's comments on the performance of Franck, etc.

The morning sessions concluded with a presentation by Dr. Ronald Prowse (Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit) which compared Tournemire's improvisations with his compositions. By way of illustration, Prowse focused on the Postlude from Tournemire's office for the Immaculate Conception and Tournemire's 1931 improvisation on *Ave maris stella*. Tournemire's approach was then contrasted with the improvisational approach of Dupré, allowing a portrait of an inspired Tournemire to emerge.

The keynote address, given by Rev. Dr. Stephen Schloesser (Loyola University, Chicago), focused on the vital connection between text and music in *L'Orgue Mystique*, situating the work in the symbolist movement in general, and Tournemire's symbolist tendencies throughout his *oeuvre*. Schloesser discussed the importance of the texts not only of the chant, but also of Guéranger's meditations on them in his multi-volume *Liturgical Year*, demonstrating that Tournemire intended a sort of textual exegesis in his compositions. Comparing the style of presentation in published form of Tournemire's work with that of a highly-texted (and more successful) Messiaen, Schloesser argued not only that Tournemire might have been more successful in achieving recognition and appreciation of *L'Orgue Mystique* had he included relevant quotations from the chants with each movement, but also that Tournemire himself perhaps saw his mistake in not doing so as evidenced by subsequent publications which prominently displayed textual references, as well as concert programs of *L'Orgue Mystique* which did likewise.

The final session of papers focused on teacher and student relationships to Tournemire, beginning with two papers on Messiaen and Tournemire. Elizabeth McLain (University of Michigan) focused her discussion of the relationship between the two on an analysis of Tournemire's influence on Messiaen's *L'Ascension*. McLain compared Tournemire and Messiaen's use of chant, noting their similar penchant

for paraphrase technique, but distinguishing the practice thereof most particularly through Messiaen's reworking and abstraction of chant melodies into his own musical language. Through various musical examples drawn from the orchestral version of Messaien's work, McLain demonstrated the effective combination of new techniques with those adopted and adapted from Tournemire in an effective portrayal of the subject matter.

The second paper on Messiaen, given by Dr. Jennifer Donelson (Nova Southeastern University), compared the notion of sacred music in the writings of Tournemire and Messiaen, focusing on the composers' common inspiration in Ernest Hello. Situating the study of art apart from aesthetics and instead in the realm of man working with matter, Hello's writings focused on the embodiment of artistic inspiration through individual style in the well-executed work of art, noting the impossibility of complete attainment of the ideal in the work of art itself. The striving for the ideal and the lack of complete fulfillment in art provided a poetically philosophical encapsulation of the eschatological element in sacred music for both composers. Through his understanding of Aquinas, Messiaen pushed this shared insight further, noting the bedazzling effect of God's truth on the intellect and striving for an analogical bedazzlement in his own works. The relationship of the *oeuvres* Messiaen and Tournemire to the liturgy and concert hall was also explored.

The relationship of Tournemire to his *cher Maître*, César Franck, was probed in a paper by R.J. Stove (*Organ Australia*, Melbourne) on Tournemire's biography of Franck. Stove's discussion of the biography demonstrated the success in the volume at stating more about Tournemire than about Franck, given its often high tone and scope. Stove noted that a person reading the biographies of Franck written by both d'Indy and Tournemire would never have suspected that Tournemire studied with Franck for a much shorter period than d'Indy, since Tournemire's biography desperately attempts to point to the very mind and soul of Franck's compositions and teaching in a manner that eclipses d'Indy's efforts. Stove pointed out, however, that the biography does serve as an effective means of understanding the enormous impact of Franck on Tournemire.

The final paper of the conference was given by Dr. Crista Miller (Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Houston) on the work of Naji Hakim as a successor to the Ste. Clotilde tradition of chant-based compositions. After first discussing the general characteristics of Hakim's compositions (the use of Maronite chant, *maqam* and Arab scales, eastern instrumental effects, etc.), Miller drew fascinating comparisons between Hakim and Tournemire's settings of chants for the feast of the Sacred Heart in *Embrace of Fire* and the office for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus respectively. Of particular note was Miller's discussion of the history of the evolution of the propers for the feast of the Sacred Heart around the time of composition and publication of *L'Orgue Mystique* and Tournemire's use of the superseded propers, thus making his office for the feast day "outdated" from the moment of its publishing.

The conference concluded with a recital by Dr. Rudy de Vos, Organist and Director of Music at the Cathedral of Christ the Light (Oakland, California). Bookending the first section of the recital were works by Tournemire—first, the transcription of Tournemire's improvisation on *Victimae paschali laudes*, and then, fittingly, the last office of the liturgical year and the last composed of *L'Orgue Mystique*, the office for the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost, issuing an emphatic *Deo gratias* in its prominent use of the Te Deum. Placed between the works by Tournemire were Vierne's lyrical *Méditation* (from *Trois Improvisations*), the relentlessly creative *Fugue and Caprice* No. 9 of Roberday and the wide-ranging *Grand Dialogue* of Marchand, at times majestically exuberant and at others delicately lyrical. The crown jewel of de Vos's playing on Friday evening, however, was his masterful treatment of Franck's 2nd *Chorale*. The recital concluded with a delightful *Toccata* by Marcel Lanquetuit.

The publication of a volume including the conference papers, edited by Drs. Jennifer Donelson and Stephen Schloesser is expected in the spring of 2013. A second conference on Tournemire entitled "The Aesthetics and Pedagogy of Charles Tournemire: Chant and Improvisation in the Liturgy" is planned for October 21–24 at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. More information on these projects is available at www.musicasacra.com/tournemire.