

Music in Catholic Church Liturgy: Vatican II to Current Trends

Cardinal Alexander K. Sample, Ordinary of Portland, Oregon http://musicasacra.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SacredMusic_ArchbishopSample.pdf

—the home of Oregon Catholic Press—is at the vanguard to steer the Catholic liturgy away from performance/community hour and back toward prayer and sacredness. This presentation focuses on the fact that the center of gravity for Catholic Church music is shifting rapidly, boosted by the change in the English text to the mass of Advent, 2011. Thanks to the Internet and availability of information, Catholic guidelines about music are no longer the province of arcane books or a handful of seminar-givers at National Association of Pastoral Musicians conferences.

Kevin Galiè, J.D., M.Mus, born and raised in Philadelphia, is now a dual-citizen and resident of Boston (Jamaica Plain – Fort Hill) and le Marche, Italy (Ascoli Piceno). He is a frequent keyboardist and recording artist with many of Boston's orchestras, including the Boston Ballet Orchestra, Boston Symphony, Boston Pops, Handel and Haydn Society, New Bedford Symphony, Boston Philharmonic, Pro Arte Orchestra, and others. He is director of the sixty-five-voice Coro Dante and fifty-five-voice M.I.T. Women's Chorale, and a board member of the Società Dante Alighieri in Cambridge (Massachusetts). He is director of music at Blessed John XXIII Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts, and a guest lecturer at the Longy School of Music, Cambridge (Massachusetts). He is a prolific composer and arranger of choral and ballet orchestral music. Additionally, he has composed a nearly complete set of chant psalm settings in English.

Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary, Weston, MA

<http://www.blessedjohnxxiii.edu/>

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AGO PRESENTATION OUTLINE: Music in Catholic Church Liturgy: Vatican II to Current Trends

1.) Brief history/liturgical documents – then and now

TREND: WHAT DOES V-II ITSELF ACTUALLY SAY?

a.) What do the docs really ask?

- Entrance
- Kyrie
- Gloria (also weddings)
- Psalm
- Alleluia (not weekday?)
- Offertory
- Sanctus/ Memorial Accl'm/Amen/Agnus Dei
- Communion Processional Chant
- Hymn after mass?

2.) Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary - 66 seminarians, 33 dioceses –

- TREND: TRADIES ARE ON THE RISE, YOUTH FLEXIBLE AND ENTHUSIASTIC, MIDDLE AGED CATHOLICS????
- Our Liturgy Committee
- 2012 survey of mass settings
- Ongoing points of discussion/disagreement

3.) Trends: International

TRENDS: THE MOVEMENTS

4.) TREND FOR FUTURE?: Canards/Polemics on the arguments from the camps, ‘trady’s’ and “zero tolerance latin”

5.) Resources:

Musica sacra (considered by many to be a trady ground zero) <http://musicasacra.com/>
OCP -

DISCUSSION:

Trend: a.)today there is an increasing divide between those who cite commentaries and ancillary documents as necessary clarifications/elucidations, and those who say the only docs that are binding are V-II itself and the GIRM.

b.) With the accessibility of liturgical docs through USCCB and other sites, and the ‘control-F’ key, documents and sources are no longer the province of experts and workshop-givers, everyone has easy access to what the church is really saying, and many are confused as to why the church is often so far away from what the docs ask.

c.) Cardinal Sample “Celebrating the Spirit of the Liturgy”

CARDINAL SAMPLE ADDRESS: Address by His Excellency Archbishop Alexander King Sample, Archbishop, Portland, Oregon, Delivered at the CMAA colloquium, Salt Lake City, Utah June 19, 2013

*“for far too long we have been trying to make
the sacred liturgy do something it was never intended to do. The second Vatican Council,
reiterating the long tradition of the Church, reminded us that the purpose of the divine*

worship accomplished though the sacred liturgy is to give glory to God and to sanctify the faithful. Instead we have far too often imposed from the outside a meaning, purpose and even perhaps our own agenda onto the sacred liturgy. This we have allowed to happen instead of allowing the true inner and essential meaning of the sacred liturgy express itself in word, ritual action, beauty, art, decorum and music.

That is my central thesis here today. We must rediscover in the Church, or for many perhaps discover for the first time, the true "spirit of the liturgy." ... "What might be appropriate for a religious youth rally or a charismatic prayer meeting may not be suitable for divine worship in the holy sacrifice of the Mass." –

Questions: a.) do church music directors must get on board with also being able to provide music for youth rallies or charismatic prayer meetings, or perhaps losing our positions to someone who can do that, but cannot play a decent hymn or Bach prelude on the organ – is it not easier to go 'down market' then to go 'up market' as long as boundaries between Mass and assemblies is made clear and reinforced? b.) Can we do much to change current adult church-goers? Is not the only way seemingly to start with the children? Can this not be tough w/o Pastor support? Viz. children (assuming CCD and no school) are not typical DRE's often musically in the 'camp-fire' zone of taste/preference?

1.) Brief history/liturgical documents – then and now – current trend is -people are dismissing documents like Musicam Sacram, USCCB statements as 'post conciliar' and 'advisory' or 'as only an exhortation'- thus the only documents that it seems people cannot undermine this way are Vatican II itself, and perhaps... the GIRM. We have all gotten caught up in STL and other commentaries, V-II itself is quite clear:

a.) VATICAN II - CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY

SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM (1st of 16 documents)¹

- SOLEMNLY PROMULGATED BY HIS HOLINESS

POPE PAUL VI ON DECEMBER 4, 1963 *** Back to basics - Liturgists have been known to side-step and minimize all other documents below as 'post-conciliar' or 'advisory' – so the only documents that no-one seems to disagree about being absolutely binding are 1.) Vatican II itself, 2.) the GIRM

21.) These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it.

22./3.: Therefore no other person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority

30. To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.

34. The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions; they should be within the people's powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.

36..... the use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites. 2. But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants,

37....., the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

40. , In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed (only by territorial eccl. Authority – not parish priest)

¹ 1. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963.
2. *Inter Mirifica*, Decree On the Means of Social Communication, 1963.
3. *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution On the Church, 1964.
4. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, Decree On the Catholic Churches of the Eastern Rite, 1964.
5. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism, 1964.
6. *Christus Dominus*, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops In the Church, 1965.
7. *Perfectae Caritatis*, Decree On Renewal of Religious Life, 1965.
8. *Optatam Totius*, Decree On Priestly Training, 1965.
9. *Gravissimum Educationis*, Declaration On Christian Education, 1965.
10. *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration On the Relation Of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965.
11. *Dei Verbum*, Dogmatic Constitution On Divine Revelation, 1965.
12. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree On the Apostolate of the Laity, 1965.
13. *Dignitatis Humanae*, Declaration On Religious Freedom, 1965.
14. *Ad Gentes*, Decree On the Mission Activity of the Church, 1965.
15. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree On the Ministry and Life of Priests, 1965.
16. *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution On the Church In the Modern World, 1965.

48..... Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.

50....the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded; other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor.....

54..... Nevertheless 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.

116. The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services.

Comment: meaning? Perhaps, if Gregorian chant IS done at a mass, no one has authority to accuse it of being OUT of place...? (Note: Salve Regina, Mode VI Alleluia, etc. technically are not 'Gregorian' chant) – see PSJXXIII sample psalm

117. Nevertheless 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.(the gradual simplex)

118. Religious singing by the people is to be intelligently fostered so that in devotions and sacred exercises, as also during liturgical services, the voices of the faithful may ring out according to the norms and requirements of the rubrics.

119. In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are peoples who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. For this reason due importance is to be attached to their music, and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius, as indicated in....

120.....In the Latin Church the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem, for it is the traditional musical instrument..... instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful.

b.)Musica Sacram - 47.: Pastors of souls should take care that besides the vernacular "the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them."

c.)GIRM General Instruction of the Roman Missal – PROCESSIONAL CHANTS, NO RITE OF SILENCE FOR CELEBRANT SELF COMMUNICATING, NO PROVISION FOR RECESSIONAL

d.)STL (supercedes earlier) – NO CARPET IN CHURCHES (replaces Music in Catholic Worship and Liturgical Music Today) SttL controversy: The USCCB did not choose to have the document receive the required 2/3 vote of the Latin-Rite bishops in order to forward the document to Rome for the necessary recognitio. Sing to the Lord was approved by a vote of 132 bishops to 12 (with, approximately 6 bishops abstaining or not voting), i.e., by 88% of the bishops. (USCCB meeting, Baltimore, November 12-14 2007.) Sing to the Lord was never submitted to the Holy See for recognitio, and thus it cannot trump documents like Sacrosanctum Concilium or even Liturgiam Authenticam, with their cautions about not changing the Mass texts. Redemptionis Sacramentum sets the precedent forth, and codifies it: [28.] All liturgical norms that a Conference of Bishops will have established for its territory in accordance with the law are to be submitted to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the recognitio, without which they lack any binding force.

e.)BLS USCCB, Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship (2000) - ORGAN

f.) Other statements/ exhortations/motu proprio - Tra le sollecitudini (Italian for "among the concerns") was a motu proprio issued 22 November 1903 by Pope Pius X, possibly co-written by Don Lorenzo Perosi, in which the Pope set forth new regulations for the performance of music in the Roman Catholic Church. These reforms reaffirmed the primacy of Gregorian chant, which had largely fallen out of favor, and the superiority of Renaissance polyphony, especially that of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, over other, later polyphonic music. It also excluded women from singing in mixed ensembles with men, discouraged music that smacked of modernity or secular influences, and barred the use of piano, percussion, and other instruments

g.) LTA John Paul II, Letter to Artists (1999)

h.) MS Sacred Congregation for Rites, Musica Sacram (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy) (1967)

i.) MSD Pius XII, Musicae Sacrae Disciplina (On Sacred Music) (1955)

j.) SacCar Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis (Sacrament of Charity) (2007) – exhortation, seminarians should learn Latin -

k.) USCCB United States Conference of Catholic Bishops <http://www.usccb.org/>

Presiders/Deacons chants – OCP – they are very good about answering emails on liturgical questions (Lourdes Gloria example)

What do the docs really ask?

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- Communion Processional Chant
- Hymn after mass?

2.) Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary - 66 seminarians, 33 dioceses –

- Our Liturgy Committee
- 2012 survey of mass settings,
- Ongoing points of discussion/disagreement e.g. “should come from the heart,” how do we have authority to ignore liturgical guidelines “– the misunderstanding of pastoral expediency, the debate on progressive solemnity

3.) Trends in Italy, Colombia, and American Dominican Republicans, Boston, National, pole of attendees of this meeting Italy – Nella Casa del Padre – but mostly homemade, no copyright permissions, no melodies, Colombia – more or less the same – Dominicans – standards songs from Spanish traditions, many non-canonical Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei – only some clergy trying to correct

3a.) World Trend: ANTIPHONISM: Called for from the very beginning by the GIRM, Antiphonal style away from Strophe style – Lourdes - [Jean-Paul Lécot \(1947 - \)](#) (Capellmeister of Lourdes) - huge influence, also [Kiko Argüello](#) – middle eastern chant influence, increase of Melismaticism , Italy – Don Marco Frisina

3b.) New Media/Worship Aides:

- i.) AV PROJECTION (Power Point, etc.) of hymns – has time come? (Hour of Power/ Robert Schuler did it long ago, seen in Taiwan, Boston, etc.) – copyright perm's still needed
- ii.) Home-made pew books of Ordinaries (St. Paul's, Harvard Sq., many churches)

3c.) Contemp Christian – Hillsong United (Spirit and Song already long passe)? Life Teen e 'ghetto-ization'? Better to incorporate youth into blended (contemp/classical) liturgies (remember 'Hour of Power') ?

Canards/Polemics on the arguments from the camps, 'tradies' and otherwise

- a.) Confusion of 'latin mass'
 - i.) Extraordinary rite ("Tridentine")
 - ii.) Novus Ordo – all latin (except readings/sermon?)
 - iii.) Novus Ordo – sung latin responses
 - iv.) Novus Ordo – required latin responses – Musicam Sacra
- b.) The sensitive issue of lack of training of existing 'music directors' in catholic parishes who may not have at least a B.A. in organ or choral conducting?
- c.) History – in the 60's serious attempts at a.) English melismatic chant came out (soundly following VII guidelines) along with Lucien Deiss, but this quickly got replaced by b.) the Sebastian Temple era, c.) the Eagles'Wings era which we're still somewhat in now

- 4.) FUTURE: - dilemma – current Catholics are steeped in 30 years of a certain musical style, clergy feel they need to compete with evangelicals, the fever of traditionalism among the youth is not bringing along suburban adult-goers

OCP? “If you're being run out of town, get in front of the crowd and make it look like a parade.”
 “~Author Unknown

- 5.) INTERNATIONAL TRENDS: The Movements: Focolarini, C & L, Opus Dei, Santo Spirito, Regnum Christi (Legionnaires of Christ),
- BISHOPS LISTS ASKED FOR BY GIRM: Italy and Spain have done it, will it ever happen here? Is there lobbying in the American Catholic Church by large (albeit nonprofit) corporate interests?
 - POPE FRANCES: This presenter has been now at both the Pallium mass and the canonization with Pope Frances – he seems to not have made much change to the music program at St. Peter’s, at least so far . . . – he apparently has made some liturgical changes, music may be coming. . .
 - Italy (Nella Casa Del Padre) (most parishes have homemade pirate booklets, texts only)
 - South/Central America, Colombia (CELEBRAR CANTANDO(ECUADOR – 2ND ED’N 2014)), info@plmecuador.com, <http://www.plmecuador.com/distri.html>

PROLOGO A LA SEGUNDA EDICIÓN

Es motivo de gran alegría para Publicaciones Litúrgico Musicales del Ecuador y para los cultores de la música sagrada presentar esta nueva edición del Cantoral Litúrgico Pastoral “Celebrar Cantando”, minuciosamente revisada y ampliada.

Paralelamente, esta obra está acompañada de pistas de música instrumental en disco compacto, con la secuencia numérica del cantoral, que facilitaran el aprendizaje de los cantos, como también podrán ser utilizadas durante las celebraciones litúrgicas.

La segunda edición incorpora dos capítulos esenciales, uno dedicado a la catequesis de los niños (Capítulo VII) y el segundo, de obras corales (Capítulo VIII), con partituras a 3 y 4 voces, para aquellos músicos, coros y fieles que tienen el deseo de enriquecer y solemnizar las celebraciones.

La amplia y rápida difusión de esta obra es signo de esperanza de llegar a que se mejore siempre más la calidad del canto en las Celebraciones Litúrgicas y la educación de nuestros cantores a la lectura de la notación musical.

Damos gracias a Dios y felicitamos de corazón a los difusores y 'apóstoles' del canto litúrgico.



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 St. 149

Segunda edición, revisada de acuerdo a que el Cantoral nuevo, un manual para los miembros de congregación, clases de liturgia y formación a niños y un segundo capítulo de obras corales. Incluye un CD con pistas de música instrumental en formato MP3 para facilitar el aprendizaje de los cantos, como también podrán ser utilizadas durante las celebraciones litúrgicas.

La actual edición está acompañada de una guía musical de todos los cantos en formato de audio MP3 para su utilización en la Parroquia, las parroquias y otras celebraciones.

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Neo-Catechumens (Kiko Arguello) and American Dominicans (sheets) , Boston, National

- Bi-Lingual parishes – Q: Bi-lingual pew books (WLB We Celebrate) or 2 different books? Problems with OCP’s Flor Y Canto, which Pope Saint John XXIII National Seminary has used now for several years.

6.) Resources/Partial Bibliography:

- *Musica sacra* (considered by many to be a tradie ground zero) <http://musicasacra.com/>
 OCP –
- NPM – Nation Pastoral Musicians Association, <http://www.npm.org/> - excellent resource for chants form Roman Missal
<http://www.npm.org/Cchants/>
- *Adoremus Bulletin* - <http://www.adoremus.org/>

- [Joseph P. Swain \(Colgate U.\)](#), author of *Sacred Treasure: Understanding Catholic Liturgical Music*, interview with with straight talk about sacred music.
http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/2667/liturgical_music_today_the_best_of_times_the_worst_of_times.aspx#.Umuimu38LIU

<http://www.devinrose.heroicvirtuecreations.com/blog/2012/01/05/catholic-music-a-state-of-confusion/>

Sample/Arinze letter with specific directives to Life Teen:
http://www.jimmyakin.org/2004/07/flash_lifeteen_.html

blog on catholic music: a state of confusion? with many comments from jan 2012
<http://www.devinrose.heroicvirtuecreations.com/blog/2012/01/11/podcast-orthodoxy-books-catholic-music-agrarianism/>

18:26 – 24:52 podcast on catholic music
<http://www.catholic.com/radio/shows/sacred-music-7527>

the state of liturgical music, Helen Hull Hitchcock podcast july 2010
<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/bring-on-the-revolution>

letter and follow-ups praising “sing to the Lord”
<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/pop-goes-the-mass>

Part one – the curse of bad liturgical music
<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/bad-poetry-bad-theology>

part two - the curse of bad liturgical music

<http://www.dioceseofmarquette.org/UserFiles/Bishop/PastoralLetter-RejoiceInTheLordAlways.pdf>

20 pp pastoral letter by sample on music
<http://www.dioceseofmarquette.org/UserFiles/Bishop/PastoralLetter-RejoiceInTheLordAlways.pdf>

short commentary on SAMPLE’s pastoral letter
<http://philotheaonphire.blogspot.com/2013/06/music-to-our-ears-archbishop-samples.html>

CARDINAL SAMPLE’s address to Sacred Music Colloquium june 2013
http://musicasacra.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/SacredMusic_ArchbishopSample.pdf

Jeffrey Tucker: “Hidden Hand Behind Catholic Music” - about ocp’s stranglehold on catholic music
<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=4265&CFID=61711946&CFTOKEN=34751354>

Sacred music podcast by Jeffrey Tucker Sept 2012
<http://www.catholic.com/radio/shows/the-state-of-liturgical-music-4614>

The Spirit of the Liturgy (Ignatius Press, 2000), then-Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations (Mundelein/Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2007).
- Anthony Ruff, OSB, Associate Professor of Theology, [Saint John's School of Theology-Seminary](#), 1998-present, Collegeville, Minnesota

“Sing to the Lord” – Comment by Helen Hitchcock <http://www.adoremus.org/1207USCCBNNovMeeting.html> - Helen Hull Hitchcock is founding director of Women for Faith & Family and editor of its quarterly journal, *Voices*. She is also editor of the *Adoremus Bulletin* a monthly publication of *Adoremus - Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy*, of which she is a co-founder. She is married to James Hitchcock, professor of history at St. Louis University. - See more at: <http://www.adoremus.org/editor.html#sthash.ZjJjbHg5.dpuf>

Five Myths About Worship in the Early Church - Michael P. Foley

[Reflections on the 2011 GIRM: Part I](#) by Adam Bartlett

[Dramatic Changes in Music Rubrics for New Missal](#) - Posted by Jeffrey A. Tucker

Liturgy Committee Meeting Minutes

Present: Monsignor Mongeluzzo, Fr. Sylvia, Kevin Galie', Greg Bierbaum, Chris Braley, Steve Cartwright, Ken Gill, Tom Griffin, Avery Hanna, Brian Maxwell, Shannon Thurman

November 28, 2012

Next meeting: January 30, 2013

I. **Opening**

The meeting opened with Msgr. Mongeluzzo leading us in prayer.

II. **Minutes**

Minutes of the previous were reviewed and approved as submitted.

III. **Discussion**

Our work on the review of music Mass settings continues. We have reviewed about 50 different settings and everyone shared their recommendations which were compiled on a list. The initial list has been whittled down to 19 possible settings to consider.

Kevin asked Msgr. Mongeluzzo if there was any guidance on the repetition of words in hymns sung similar to the restrictions on prayers. Monsignor said he would research and get back to us with a definitive answer.

We then reviewed the process going forward. After a bit of discussion the procedure we will follow is:

- A list of all 19 settings with web links will be e-mailed to the committee members;
- Each member will have time to review the settings;
- It was strongly suggested that in addition to the '*Holy, Holy*' we also listen to at least the beginning of the '*Gloria*' when making our decision;
- By our Jan. 30 meeting we want to have the five top committee selections set;
- These 5 will then be sent in a survey to the student body for their input so we can collect data on their preference to help us present a prioritized list for approval by the administration.

A discussion followed as to how to rank the feedback from both the committee and the student body responses. The two processes for filtering the data were to use a simple number method counting the number of times an individual setting was mentioned or having everyone put their preferences in order, assign a numeric value to

each preference level and then calculate a 'market average'. After some discussion it was decided to use a simple majority vote to rank settings.

IV. Action Plan

- All selections and links will be emailed out by Tom Griffin along with a list of the settings.
- Each committee member will have the opportunity to listen to the 19 settings.
- Each member is asked to pick five (5) settings that they would recommend.
- The completed lists are to be returned to Tom by January 22, 2013.
- He will then combine the data into a list by number of 'votes' a setting received.
- This list will be presented to the committee for approval of the top five on the January 30, 2013 meeting.

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V. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:10

Celebrating the Spirit of the Liturgy

Address by
His Excellency Archbishop Alexander King Sample
Archbishop, Portland, Oregon
Delivered at the CMAA colloquium
Salt Lake City, Utah
June 19, 2013

I am very grateful and deeply honored to be invited to address this 23rd colloquium on sacred music sponsored by the Church Music Association of America. I am especially happy to be here in this beautiful Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City, a place where I have had the delight of concebrating and celebrating the sacred liturgy on many occasions during my summer trips to this beautiful city to visit my sister, Marti, who lives here. I am happy that she is with me today, although I warned her that her brother might bore her to death today in this talk!

I would also like to acknowledge my long acquaintance with the CMAA extending over many years back to the 1980's when I came under the tutelage of the great Msgr. Richard Schuler, former editor of the periodical, Sacred Music. I lived with him for a year at the Church of St. Agnes in St. Paul, MN while pursuing philosophy studies at the College of St. Thomas in preparation for the seminary. I sang in the Gregorian *schola cantorum*, and it was there that I experienced my first true formation in the sacred liturgy. I dedicate this talk to Msgr. Schuler with deep gratitude for all he taught me, by word and example. May he forever rejoice with the choirs of angels in the heavenly liturgy.

I would like to start my presentation by giving four examples in my own pastoral experience that illustrate the point I hope to make today.

1. After a diocesan wide youth conference, the comment was made to me that we lost the spirit that we had going once we began the Mass. We had the standard praise and worship music for the young people throughout the conference, i.e. with contemporary instruments, drums, electric guitars, loud amplification and a lively beat. But when it came time to celebrate the Mass, I insisted that the music be appropriate for the sacred liturgy. The comment went something like this: "We had the kids all fired up and excited, and then came the Mass and we hit the wall. The boring music that was more reverential, slower and more meditative killed the spirit we had going."
2. I recently saw a catechetical exercise that was very well intentioned but, in my mind, missed the mark. The intent of the exercise was to help young people realize that the Mass is in itself a very powerful and awesome thing, even if it was not "exciting"

on a human level. It went something like, “Even though not every Mass can be considered “exciting,” nevertheless the paschal mystery is present and that is in itself is an awesome thing.” The reason I think it missed the mark a bit is that there was an implied assumption that ideally the Mass should be exciting on a more human or emotional level, especially for young people.

3. A very fine pastor of a parish that has an annual Polka Mass once told me that it is actually done very reverently and that the musicians are very devout. I do not doubt their sincerity and good will.
4. At a conference where I was presenting to parish musicians, one of the persons present, who was not at all impressed with the move toward chanting the antiphons of the Mass, asked “But isn’t the Mass supposed to be a celebration?” The implication was that the use of chant was inimical to the customary joyful and celebratory nature of the music at Mass with which this person was familiar.

All of these examples illustrate the point that for far too long we have been trying to make the sacred liturgy do something it was never intended to do. The second Vatican Council, reiterating the long tradition of the Church, reminded us that the purpose of the divine worship accomplished through the sacred liturgy is to give glory to God and to sanctify the faithful.

Instead we have far too often imposed from the outside a meaning, purpose and even perhaps our own agenda onto the sacred liturgy. This we have allowed to happen instead of allowing the true inner and essential meaning of the sacred liturgy express itself in word, ritual action, beauty, art, decorum and music.

That is my central thesis here today. We must rediscover in the Church, or for many perhaps discover for the first time, the true “spirit of the liturgy.” Once we understand on a much deeper and profound level what the liturgy actually is, then we will know how to celebrate it.

The examples I have given seem to try to impose another purpose on the sacred liturgy. In the first example of the youth conference, apparently the liturgy is supposed to “fire up” the congregation and keep them at a spiritual fervor throughout. In the second example of well-intentioned catechesis, it seems the ideal for the liturgy is that we find it “exciting” (read “entertaining”) on a human emotional level. In the example of the Polka Mass, as long as the musicians are devout and reverent, then we can celebrate the liturgy in a style more appropriate for the dance hall. Perhaps it is supposed to me a cultural expression of the Polish culture. Well, I’m half Polish, and I love a good polka, but not at Mass!

It is the final example, however, which I find most interesting. Isn’t the Mass supposed to be a celebration? Yes, of course. But the real question is, “What are we celebrating?” Are we celebrating just for the sake of having a happy, joyful celebration? Are we celebrating for the purpose of giving us an emotion “feel good” experience? Are we celebrating, in other words, simply for the sake of celebration? Is the sacred liturgy directed to God or to

us?

What are we celebrating? If we don't know that, we are already in big trouble when it comes to how we celebrate the Mass. It reminds me of the priest who likes to tell a joke at the end of every Mass, with the intended purpose of leaving the people smiling. People will remember the joke, but forget what was said in the homily. The purpose of the Mass has been overshadowed by another intention.

The point is, unless we know the true meaning and purpose of the sacred liturgy, unless we profoundly understand what we are accomplishing, or more importantly what Christ is accomplishing in the sacred liturgy, then our celebrations will reflect that ignorance. Having lost its mooring in this essential inner reality, it will be cast about on the sea of differing interpretations reflected in often less than edifying celebrations.

Pope Benedict XVI drew our attention to this most important point. Understanding the true inner meaning and purpose of the sacred liturgy determines how it should be celebrated. I am sure that most of us here are familiar with Pope Benedict's writings and work on the sacred liturgy. I would like to draw particular attention to his work entitled "The Spirit of the Liturgy." In this monumental work we get a glimpse into Pope Benedict's (at the time Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's) view of the cosmic nature of the liturgy.

After a thorough and theologically rich exposition on the true spirit of the liturgy, our Pope emeritus makes practical application of this understanding in how the liturgy is actually celebrated. He discusses issues such as the significance of church architecture, the altar and the direction of liturgical prayer, the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, sacred time, sacred images and of course music and the liturgy.

Pope Benedict further discusses the liturgical form. He makes application of the fundamental principles to matters of the rite such as the sign of the cross, liturgical posture, gestures, the human voice, vestments and other matter of the liturgy.

Again, the message to take from all of this is that how we fundamentally understand and appreciate the true meaning, purpose and spirit of the sacred liturgy shapes the decorum and manner in which we carry out the liturgical action itself. In the examples I mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, can we really say that the true inner meaning and spirit of the liturgy is adequately and faithfully being expressed in the rite itself, especially as regards sacred music? I think not, and I hope to illustrate that by exploring the true meaning of the sacred liturgy.

Before moving on, however, to that discussion, I wish to make an important point. It is my contention, and that of many others, that the renewal and reform of the sacred liturgy is absolutely key and essential to the work of the new evangelization. I have long been of the opinion that if the Church is going to fulfill her mission in the modern world, we need to get three things right. One is catechesis and faith formation, for children, young people and

adults. The other is the renewal of the sacred liturgy, which is not at all unrelated to the need for a deeper catechesis of our people. The third is our work of charity and service to the poor and the marginalized, which is the living out of the mystery celebrated in the sacred liturgy.

But, until we get the celebration of the sacred liturgy and all other forms of divine worship in the Church right, I fear we will be largely spinning our wheels trying to give the new evangelization traction in our modern culture. The Church teaches us, as reiterated at the Second Vatican Council, that the liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life. This means that it is the most important thing that we do as a Church. All of the other sacraments of the Church, and all of her other apostolic works and endeavors, flow from the sacred liturgy and lead us back to it. Since this is true, all the more important it is for us to get the act of divine worship correct according to the mind and ancient tradition of the Church. This seems fairly obvious to me.

So allow me to return to the question of what it is that we are celebrating in the sacred liturgy, specifically in the holy Mass. The Mass is indeed a celebration, but what we are celebrating is the profound mystery of our salvation in Jesus Christ. We are celebrating the Paschal Mystery. We are specifically making present sacramentally and in an unbloody manner the once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, which conquered death and opened for us the way to eternal life. We used to say with regularity that we celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass. Perhaps we should use such terminology more often.

One of the typical “poll questions” that is asked of Catholics to ascertain their knowledge of Catholic doctrine is to ask them about their belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the holy Eucharist. Typically the pollster will present several options to the Catholic, each representing a different way of understanding the reality of the real presence. Only one of them is correct. In a recent Gallup poll of this sort, less than a third of Catholics polled identified the correct belief concerning the real presence of Christ in the holy Eucharist.

As disturbing as that is, I would be afraid to see the results of such a poll on the essential meaning of what is celebrated in the action of the holy Mass. What percentage of Catholics would have any understanding at all of the essential nature of the Mass as the sacrifice of Christ being truly re-presented on the altar? I suspect very few. But herein lies the problem. If we don't know what we are celebrating, how are we ever going to know how to celebrate it?

And just so no one accuses me of returning to an understanding of the Mass that belongs to a different time in the past, the Second Vatican Council reminded us in the strongest of terms of the ancient theology and meaning of the holy Mass. The Council taught that he who once offered himself on the altar of the Cross, Jesus Christ, now offers himself through the hands of priests in a sacramental manner on the altars of our Churches, perpetuating his once for all sacrifice through the ages until he comes again in glory. It is also a sacred

banquet, for we receive from Christ's sacrifice of love and self-offering his very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity as nourishment for our souls.

Allow me to delve deeper into this understanding by turning to Pope Benedict XVI's explanation of the cosmic liturgy. I know that when we first hear that it may sound a little "new age," but Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's explanation of the sacred liturgy in this way is profound and deeply faithful to the Church's tradition, as one would certainly expect from the future successor to St. Peter.

It is a very deep and theologically rich explanation of the liturgy. It is not easy to fully grasp, and one will find oneself reading it over and over again to mine its depths. Allow me an attempt at a simplified explanation that even I can understand.

During any celebration of the holy Mass, three realities are essentially taking place all at the same time. We are celebrating and making present what has already happened, what has been accomplished in Christ's saving death and resurrection. Secondly, we are already looking forward to that which is yet to come, Christ's return in glory at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. And while these two realities are being celebrated, we are simultaneously participating in the heavenly liturgy which goes on continuously in the sight of almighty God.

That is a lot to absorb! Let us examine each of these to expand our understanding of the sacred liturgy.

As I mentioned, we are making truly present in an unbloody and sacramental manner the once for all sacrifice for our salvation that Jesus offered on the altar of the cross. How is this possible, and how does it happen? First we need to understand that the central act of our redemption, Christ's offering of himself on the cross, is an act of the eternal Son of God. It is an act of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. It is an act of God himself. As act of the eternal God, who has no beginning or end, this act then transcends time and space. It is not bound to the moment in time on Calvary when Jesus breathed his last.

We know this is true through the mystery and dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Mary, the Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ, was preserved from the first moment of her conception from all stain of original sin and personal sin. But that does not mean that Mary did not need a redeemer or that she was not saved by Jesus Christ. We explain it in this way. Mary was given what is called a "prevenient grace." This means that the fruits of Christ's sacrifice that would one day be accomplished on the altar of the cross for the salvation of the world, were applied beforehand to his holy Mother, even before Jesus himself became incarnate in her womb. It was with a view toward the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that she was allowed to participate in the fruits of redemption beforehand.

We also see the "timelessness" of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross in the institution of the

holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the “first Mass,” so to speak. There in the upper room, on the night before he would offer himself on the altar of the cross, he made that saving sacrifice yet to be accomplished already present under the sacramental signs. “This is my Body which is given for you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many.” Notice the present tense. Not what will be given for you or what will be poured out, but what is given and poured. In that moment Jesus established the holy Eucharist, the ministerial priesthood and the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood.

In the same way that the sacrifice could be sacramentally present before the moment on Calvary, so too it come to us across time and space and becomes present for us in every Mass so that we may receive anew the saving fruits of our redemption. It is the same sacrifice of Calvary because it is the same victim and the same priest. Jesus Christ, the victim of the altar, is truly present under the signs of bread and wine, but truly present, Body Blood, Soul and Divinity. But it is also the same priest, for the priest we see standing at the altar acts in the very person of Christ, having been sacramentally configured to him in ordination.

This brings up an important point. It is principally Christ who acts in the sacred liturgy. We are only his instruments. Every Mass, even one celebrated by a priest in the absence of the faithful (not desirable), is an act of Christ and of the whole Church. It is not ours. It belongs to Christ and the universal Church. Jesus Christ determines the meaning and purpose of what we celebrate in the sacred liturgy, not us.

So every Mass celebrates and makes present that which has already been accomplished in Christ’s life-giving death and glorious resurrection. At every Mass, we are in the upper room, we are at the foot of the cross, we are at the empty tomb, as these events come to us sacramentally and mystically across time and space.

But in the sacred liturgy, we also mystically anticipate that which is yet to come. We look forward with joyful hope to the coming of Christ in glory at the end of time. There is then an essential orientation of the sacred liturgy toward the future fulfillment in Christ of God’s eternal plan of salvation, when the world as we know it will pass away and there will be new heavens and a new earth completely transformed by Christ’s glory.

That is why Pope Benedict XVI speaks of the eastward orientation of the sacred liturgy. In the scriptural and mystical theology of the Church, Christ will come again in glory from the east, the direction of the rising sun. The Son of God will come riding on the clouds of heaven and we symbolically look east for his coming. With our feet firmly planted on the earth, our eyes and our hearts turn to the Lord, anticipating his return in glory. Think of the beautiful Advent hymn as we look forward to the coming of the Savior, “People Look East.”

That is why the Church’s liturgy has traditionally been oriented toward the east, or at least the liturgical east if the architecture of the church building would not admit of an actual eastward orientation. Priest and people, united in prayer and in the offering of the once for

all sacrifice of Christ to the Father, looked together to the east in offering this act of divine worship. It was never that the priest “turned his back to the people.” It was always that priest and people together looked east in the sacred liturgy, watching and waiting for the Lord’s return. This eschatological orientation of the sacred liturgy must be recovered in some way if we are to recapture the true spirit of the liturgy.

Finally, while we celebrate that which has been accomplished and look forward to that which is to come, we at the same time participate in the eternal wedding banquet of the Lamb, the heavenly liturgy. At the altar, heaven is joined to earth as we enter into the eternal mysteries. Christ, now risen from the dead, gloriously triumphant and exalted at the right hand of the Father, intercedes for us. He continually shows his glorious wounds to the Father, the price of our salvation, and all the saints and hosts of heaven bow down and worship before the Lamb once slain who lives forever.

We have a foretaste of eternal life and the pledge of future glory in the sacred liturgy, even when celebrated in its simplest and most unadorned manner. We join ourselves to the heavenly liturgy. We express this beautifully in the conclusion to each preface of the Eucharistic prayer as we prepare to sing with the angels in heaven the Sanctus. What we have been talking about is especially heard in the second preface for the Holy Eucharist. Listen carefully. We pray:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Christ our Lord.

For at the Last Supper with his Apostles,
establishing for the ages to come the saving memorial of the Cross, he
offered himself to you as the unblemished Lamb,
the acceptable gift of perfect praise.

Nourishing your faithful by this sacred mystery,
you make them holy, so that the human race,
bounded by one world,
may be enlightened by one faith
and united by one bond of charity.

And so, we approach the table of this wondrous Sacrament, so
that, bathed in the sweetness of your grace,
we may pass over to the heavenly realities here foreshadowed.

Therefore, all creatures of heaven and earth
sing a new song in adoration,
and we, with all the host of Angels,

cry out, and without end we acclaim:
Holy, holy holy...

How is that for *lex orandi, lex credenda*? The law of praying is the law of believing.

Okay, that is a lot of theology of the sacred liturgy. Perhaps it is quite a bit for us to absorb. In fact, we can never exhaust the depths of this mystery celebrated in the sacred liturgy. But what does that have to do with our purpose for gathering here and the promotion of sacred music for the liturgy?

I return to my central point. Once we understand and appreciate on a very profound level the inner meaning of the holy sacrifice of the Mass; once we understand what the sacred liturgy accomplishes; once we understand what we are doing (what Christ is doing) in the sacred liturgy, only then will we be able to properly celebrate and express that meaning and purpose of the liturgy itself.

So everything we do on the celebration of the Mass must draw out and reflect the essential meaning and purpose of the sacred liturgy itself. Everything in the liturgy which touches us on the level of the senses must express the inner meaning of the holy mysteries we celebrate. Everything we see, hear, and even smell should draw us deeper into the profound mystery of God's love and mercy shown to us in his Son, Jesus Christ.

That is why everything in the sacred liturgy must be as beautiful as we can make it, drawing upon the gifts of the people of God, especially artists in the area of the sacred arts including, of course, sacred music. The architecture of the church building, the visual art and iconography adorning the temple, the decoration of the sanctuary, the vestments worn by the sacred ministers, the sacred vessels and other things used in the sacred liturgy, and the music which accompanies the liturgical action must all be beautiful, reflecting the infinite beauty and goodness of God, to whom our divine worship is directed.

But all of these things must not become ends in themselves - beauty for the sake of beauty - but must be seen as means to an end, drawing us in and making us profoundly aware of the awesome mystery we are celebrating. They must express and show forth the meaning of the Mass itself, for the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful.

I apologize if I seem to be belaboring this point, but I believe it is critically important that we get this right in the Church. I believe not understanding this point has gotten us into the trouble we are in, resulting in less than worthy liturgies in far too many instances.

If we do not get this part of the discussion correct, we will continue to see the imposition of other meanings, purposes and "styles" on the sacred liturgy. We will continue to have the Polka Mass, the Folk Mass, the Rock Mass, the Contemporary Mass, the Traditional Mass, etc...

Doing what the Church asks us to do in the celebration of the sacred liturgy, what some would surely call more traditional, cannot be seen as simply imposing another “style” on the sacred liturgy, i.e. one style in a list such as I have just given. Doing what the Church asks of us is meant to draw out and express what the Mass is in and of itself.

Applying this to the area of sacred music, we see that the music that is used in the celebration of the sacred liturgy must also contribute to the fuller expression of the mystery being celebrated. This is especially true in the singing of the Mass texts themselves, especially the antiphons, whether in English or in Latin. It has been pointed out that, just as the Church gives us the selections from sacred scripture for a particular Sunday, weekday or feast, and just as she gives us other common and proper texts, such as the ordinary of the Mass and the prayers and preface, so too she gives us the texts for the antiphons, which harmonize and further express the particular celebration.

As I said in my recent pastoral letter on sacred music, only repeating what has been said by so many of you in the past, we must “sing the Mass,” not “sing songs at Mass.” This is at the heart of what must be recovered as it concerns music for the sacred liturgy. This is what will help draw out and express the inner meaning of the sacred liturgy as we have been discussing.

Finally, I would like to touch briefly on those qualities of music that are necessary in order for it to be considered suitable for the sacred liturgy. What is sacred music?

The three essential qualities are known to all of you. They are universality, artistic quality (beauty) and sacredness. What has sadly happened in recent time is that, as long as the words of the songs talk about God or us and our relationship to God, then the music has been considered “sacred” and therefore acceptable for the liturgy. This is how we get to admitting music to the sacred liturgy that is not appropriate and, far from expressing the essential mystery being celebrated, distract from that purpose and even impose other intentions on the liturgy.

There is a difference between religious songs and music and “sacred music” in the Church’s tradition. What might be appropriate for a religious youth rally or a charismatic prayer meeting may not be suitable for divine worship in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

So, let us look at these essential qualities. The sanctity of sacred music:

Turning to the teaching of Pope St. Pius X, which has had a significant impact on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in this regard, we read:

[Sacred music] must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.¹

¹ Ibid. I:2

Vatican II emphasized the sanctity of sacred music in these terms:

(S)acred 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.²

(emphasis added)

The intrinsic beauty (artistic goodness) of sacred music

Since everything associated with the Mass must be beautiful, reflecting the infinite beauty and goodness of the God we worship, this applies in a special way to the music which forms an essential and integral part of our divine worship. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI:

Certainly, the beauty of our celebrations can never be sufficiently cultivated, fostered and refined, for nothing can be too beautiful for God, Who is Himself infinite Beauty. Yet our earthly liturgies will never be more than a pale reflection of the liturgy celebrated in the Jerusalem on high, the goal of our pilgrimage on earth. May our own celebrations nonetheless resemble that liturgy as closely as possible and grant us a foretaste of it!³

Pope St. Pius X spoke of the artistic value of sacred music, another way of considering its intrinsic beauty:

[Sacred music] must be true art, for otherwise it will be impossible for it to exercise on the minds of those who listen to it that efficacy which the Church aims at obtaining in admitting into her liturgy the art of musical sounds.⁴

The universality of sacred music

Finally, the third essential quality of sacred music must be considered, i.e. its universality. This quality means that any composition of sacred music, even one which reflects the unique culture of a particular region, would still be easily recognized as having a sacred character. The quality of holiness, in other words, is a universal principle that transcends culture.

While every nation is permitted to admit into its ecclesiastical compositions those special forms which may be said to constitute its native music, still these forms must be subordinate in such a manner to the general character of sacred music, that nobody of any nation may receive an impression other than good on hearing

² SC 112

³ Pope Benedict to priests at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, September 13, 2008

⁴ Pius X: Op. cit. I:2

*them.*⁵

This articulation of the essential qualities of sacred music is necessary because there is often a lack of understanding or confusion as to what music is proper to the Mass and worthy of its inclusion in divine worship. As I have said, not every form or style of music is capable of being rendered suitable for the Mass.

That is why the *Gloria* of the Mass set to a Polka beat or in the style of rock music is not sacred music. Why not? Because such styles of music, as delightful as they might be for the dance hall or a concert, do not possess all three of the intrinsic qualities of sanctity, artistic goodness (beauty) and universality proper to sacred music. We are not at Mass to be entertained but to render glory to God and to be sanctified by the sacred mysteries.

Going back to what we looked at earlier about what the essential meaning and inner mystery of the Mass actually is, we can see that these styles of music, and others as well, are not capable of expressing the awesome mystery of the sacred liturgy and therefore cannot be rendered suitable. Knowing that at every Mass we stand at the foot of the cross and make present the sacrifice of Christ for our salvation, could you imagine singing a Polka or having rock drums or electric guitars there before this tremendous mystery?

In conclusion, then, we have seen that the *ars celebrandi*, the art of celebrating the sacred liturgy must always draw out, express and show forth the mystery being celebrated. The true spirit of the liturgy must be communicated in everything that we do in the celebration of holy Mass. This is a tangible example of the functional principle of the sacred liturgy: *lex orandi, lex credenda* - the law of praying is the law of believing. What we pray and do in the sacred liturgy and how we do it must always express what we believe about what Christ is doing in the liturgy.

Just as important is that what we pray and how we pray also forms us and catechizes us about these same realities. That is why we need to get this right for the formation and catechesis of the future generations in the work of the new evangelization.

Sacred music plays a critical and irreplaceable role in this ongoing effort at liturgical reform and renewal. I thank the members of the Church Music Association of America for your tireless perseverance in this great effort. Never grow weary or become discouraged. We are on the brink of a profound renewal of divine worship, and you are helping lead the way. God bless you and may he prosper the work of your hands, hearts and voices!

⁵ Pius X: Op cit. I:2

Blessed John XXIII Mass Setting Survey Results 2013

No one else has seen these results yet, but here they are.

Only 41 people in the house responded to the survey.

We have a clear 1st place, and 3-way tie for 2nd (as was reflected also by the committee interestingly enough)

I will present the results at next Wednesday's meeting.

SC

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Mass of Creation | 48.78% 20 |
| Missa Jubilate Deo | 48.78% 20 |
| Mass of St. Francis | 58.54% 24 |
| Mass In Honor of Ralph Sherwin | 17.07% 7 |
| Mass of Christ the Savior | 48.78% 20 |
| Missa de Angelis | 39.02% 16 |
| Missa Pacem | 39.02% 16 |

Five Myths About Worship in the Early Church

Michael P. Foley

As the forthcoming new translation of the Roman Missal debunks the myth that liturgical language must be so banal that even the muppets on Sesame Street can understand it, it's a good time to examine five other untruths that have been wreaking havoc on the Church's worship in recent decades.

1. Mass facing the people. After studying free-standing altars in early churches, liturgists in the 1930s concluded that priests once celebrated Mass "facing the people," and that it was only under the influence of decadent medieval clericalism that they "turned their backs" to them. This myth was much in the drinking water at the time of Vatican II (1962-1965). Later, some scholars began to reexamine the evidence and found that it did not support their thesis at all, and that in fact there had been an unbroken tradition — both East and West — of priest and congregation celebrating the Eucharist in the same direction: eastward.

Pope Benedict XVI, who endorsed the most recent book refuting the versus populum error, has been trying to make the facts of the case better known. But in the past generation, millions of dollars have been spent destroying exquisite high altars and replacing them with altar-tables, all in conformity to "the practice of the early Church." Would that this myth were busted earlier.

2. Communion in the hand and under both kinds. Myths about Holy Communion follow a similar pattern. Fifty years ago, the claim that "Communion in the hand" was the universal practice of the early Church was believed by everyone, even by those who didn't wish to see the practice resuscitated. Now we're not so sure. What we can say is that some early Christian communities practiced Communion in the hand, but Communion on the tongue may be just as ancient. And when Communion in the hand was practiced, the communicant received from a priest (and only a priest), most likely by putting it in his mouth without his other hand touching it. And in some places, a woman's hand had to be covered with a white cloth!

We are more certain that the Roman Church once administered Holy Communion under both species (just as the Eastern churches have always done), but we don't know exactly how. One interesting practice, which was in use by the seventh century, had the deacon distributing the Precious Blood with the use of a golden straw. Some think he dipped the straw in the chalice (which only he or a priest or bishop could touch), closed one end with his finger, put it over the communicant's open mouth, and then lifted his finger to release the contents.

In other words, Holy Communion was probably not administered in the fast-food manner we have today, with a "grab-and-go" system of multiple efficient lines that move from one station to the other, and the communicant touching the Host or Precious Cup with his own hands. Our current arrangement may have more in common with the Protestant than the patristic. Significantly, Benedict XVI, a careful student of the Church Fathers, no longer administers Communion in the hand.

3. The vernacular. Another widespread myth is that the early Church had Mass "in the vernacular." But when Jesus worshipped in the synagogue, the language used was Hebrew, which had already been dead for 300 years. And for the first three centuries in Rome, the Mass was mostly celebrated in Greek, not Latin, which was only understood by a minority of the congregation.

When the Mass was eventually translated into Latin, it retained foreign elements such as the Hebrew amen and alleluia, and even added some, such as the Greek Kyrie eleison. Moreover, the Latin used in translating was deliberately different from what was being spoken at the time: It had curious grammatical usages and was peppered with archaisms. In other words, even when the Mass was celebrated in a language people could understand, it was never celebrated in the "vernacular" — if by that term we mean the common street language of the day.

The reason for this is simple: Every apostolic Church — to say nothing of every major world religion — has always had a sacred or hieratic language, a linguistic toolbox different from daily speech specially designed to communicate the transcendence and distinctiveness of the gospel.

4. Lay ministry. Another perduring myth is the idea that the laity were "more involved" in the Mass than they were in later ages. In our own day, this has spawned a multiplication of liturgical ministries for lay folk, such as lector, etc. The

reality is that in the early Church, all of these roles were administered by the clergy. In fact, the early Church had more ordained clerical offices (the former minor orders) than it does today. The Council of Nicea in 325, for instance, talked about fine-tuning the office of “subdeacon.” This tells us one thing: that subdeacons were already a fixture in the landscape before the council was convoked. Lay Eucharistic ministers were not.

5. The pre- vs. post-Constantinian Church. Lurking behind all of these myths is a powerful “meta-myth,” the claim that there was a rupture in the life of the Church after the Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in the fourth century. The Church before Constantine, the meta-myth goes, was simple and pristine, a Church “of the people.” After Constantine, however, the Church became clericalist, hierarchical, and corrupted by the desire for grand buildings and highfalutin’ ceremonies.

The truth is that although the Church did indeed change — in some ways for the better and some for the worse — there was far more continuity than rupture. The Church before Constantine already had firm distinctions between clergy and laity, and she already recognized the importance of beautiful art, architecture, symbolism, and solemnity. After all, the Last Supper took place during the Passover, which was itself highly ritualized, and every Mass is a consummation of the ornate liturgies of synagogue and Temple. Indeed, a Eucharistic liturgy in the second or third century was longer, more hierarchical, and more symbolically brocaded than a Sunday Mass today. And since pews are a Protestant invention to accommodate long sermons, you either stood or knelt on the floor the entire time.

Like a bad virus, the myth of a utopian, pre-Constantinian, kumbaya-singing Church continues to impair. A typical example is the 2001 video *A History of the Mass*, produced by Liturgy Training Publications, one of the more influential purveyors of information about Catholic worship in the United States. After describing an idyllic, egalitarian community in which bishops gave up their seats for poor widows at the Eucharistic table, the narration shifts with the ominous words: “But then... the Emperor Constantine became a Christian.” You can imagine what follows (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Moreover, even if every one of these myths were shown to be true, it would still not justify returning to the patristic era. In 1947, Pope Pius XII prophetically warned against archeologism, an “exaggerated and senseless antiquarianism” which presumes that the older is better than that which has developed organically over time and with the approval of the Church (*Mediator Dei* 64). The pope was worried about liturgical innovators who would leapfrog over 1,900 years of sacred tradition and divine inspiration. He was right to worry, but not even he foresaw the extent to which that targeted Golden Past would be a reconstruction of dubious accuracy.

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| | | | Preference Rank by Individuals * | | | | Total number of mentions | Web link |
|----|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | ADOREMUS | Mass of St. Thomas More | 1 | | | | 1 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 2 | ADOREMUS | Missa Jubilate Deo | 1 | | | | 1 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 3 | BASILICA | Mass of All Saints | 1 | | | | 1 | http://www.nationalshrine.com/site/c.osJRKVPBjNH/b.7970199/k.8EFF/Mass_Settings.Htm |
| 4 | BASILICA | Mass of the Immaculate Conception | 2 | | | | 1 | http://www.nationalshrine.com/site/c.osJRKVPBjNH/b.7970199/k.8EFF/Mass_Settings.Htm |
| 5 | CCWATER | Mass in honor of Ralph Sherwin | 4 | | | | 1 | http://www.ccwatershed.org/vatican/Ralph_Sherwin_Videos/ |
| 6 | GIA-New | Mass of Joy & Peace | 4 | | | | 1 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/new_mass_settings.cfm |
| 7 | GIA-New | Mass of Plenty | 5 | | | | 1 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/new_mass_settings.cfm |
| 8 | GIA-New | Storrington Mass | 2 | 3 | | | 2 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/new_mass_settings.cfm |
| 9 | GIA-Revised | Community Mass | 5 | x | | | 2 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/revised_mass_settings.cfm |
| 10 | GIA-Revised | Mass of Creation | 3 | x | 1 | 3 | 4 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/revised_mass_settings.cfm |
| 11 | GIA-Revised | Missa Pacem | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/revised_mass_settings.cfm |
| 12 | ICEL | Chant 1 | 1 | x | | | 2 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 13 | ICEL | Missa de Angelis | 2 | 3 | | | 2 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 14 | OCP | Heritage Mass | 3 | 4 | 5 | | 3 | www.ocp.org/newmasssettings/2012-resources |
| 15 | OCP | Mass of Christ the Savior | 1 | x | 2 | | 3 | www.ocp.org/newmasssettings/2012-resources |
| 16 | OCP | Mass of Glory | 4 | | | | 1 | www.ocp.org/newmasssettings/2012-resources |
| 17 | St.M | Mass of the Patriarchs | 4 | | | | 1 | www.stmichaelhymnal.com/tubing/buyhymnal/shoppingcart/tabid/uc/main/NewEdition/MassParts.aspx |
| 18 | WLP | Mass of St Ann | 2 | | | | 1 | www.singthenewmass.com/New_Musical_Settings.html |
| 19 | You Tube | Mass of St. Francis | 5 | | | | 1 | http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rdebhdQ0tA |

* Rankings in descending order 1-5;
x indicates like Mass but not ranked.

| | Source | Mass Title | | Web link |
|----|-------------|---|---|--|
| 1 | GIA-Revised | Mass of Creation | 6 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/revise mass_settings.cfm |
| 2 | ADOREMUS | Missa Jubilate Deo (latin simple chant) | 6 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 3 | You Tube | Mass of St. Francis (Australia) | 5 | http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rdebhdQ0tA |
| 4 | CCWATER | Mass in honor of Ralph Sherwin | 4 | http://www.ccwatershed.org/vatican/Ralph_Sherwin_Videos/ |
| 5 | OCP | Mass of Christ the Savior | 4 | www.ocp.org/newmasssettings/2012-resources |
| 6 | ICEL | Missa de Angelis | 4 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 7 | GIA-Revised | Missa Pacem | 4 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/revise mass_settings.cfm |
| 8 | ADOREMUS | Mass of St. Thomas More | 3 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 9 | GIA-Revised | Community Mass | 2 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/revise mass_settings.cfm |
| 10 | OCP | Heritage Mass | 2 | www.ocp.org/newmasssettings/2012-resources |
| 11 | GIA-New | Mass of Joy & Peace | 2 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/new mass_settings.cfm |
| 12 | St.M | Mass of the Patriarchs | 2 | www.stmichaelhymnal.com/tubing/buyhymnal/shoppingcart/tabid/uc/main/NewEdition/MassParts.aspx |
| 13 | ICEL | Chant 1 | 1 | http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/adoremus-hymnal/downloadable-mp3s.htm |
| 14 | BASILICA | Mass of All Saints | 1 | http://www.nationalshrine.com/site/c.osJRKVPBJnH/b.7970199/k.8EFF/Mass_Settings.Htm |
| 15 | BASILICA | Mass of the Immaculate Conception | 1 | http://www.nationalshrine.com/site/c.osJRKVPBJnH/b.7970199/k.8EFF/Mass_Settings.Htm |
| 16 | OCP | Mass of Glory | 0 | www.ocp.org/newmasssettings/2012-resources |
| 17 | GIA-New | Mass of Plenty | 0 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/new mass_settings.cfm |
| 18 | WLP | Mass of St Ann | 0 | www.singthenewmass.com/New_Musical_Settings.html |
| 19 | GIA-New | Storrington Mass | 0 | http://www.giamusic.com/sacred_music/new mass_settings.cfm |