

**PRAISE TO THE LORD --
LITURGICAL MUSIC, DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION:
THE MINISTRY OF CHOIR**

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Resources and References:

Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2007)
General Instruction of the Roman Missal (USCCB 2003, rev. 2011)
Introduction of the Order of Mass: A Pastoral Resource of the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy
(Committee on Divine Worship, USCCB, 2003)
Chirograph for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio "Tra le Sollecitudini" on Sacred Music
(John Paul II, 2003)

LITURGY AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION

"Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows." Sacrosanctum Concilium, #10

Liturgy forms and equips disciples to live out the Mission of Christ and of the church. Charity, justice and evangelization are thus the normal consequences of the liturgical celebration. Particularly inspired by sung participation, the body of the Word incarnate goes forth to spread the Gospel with full force and compassion. (STL, #9) Good celebrations can foster and nourish faith, poor celebrations may weaken it. (STL, #5)

"Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord."

"Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life."

Often overlooked, the Dismissal Rite is a mandate for the assembly. The Eucharist is not merely an expression of communion the Church's life; it is also a **project of solidarity** for all of humanity.....The Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a *promoter of communion, peace and solidarity* in every situation.....The Eucharist is a great **school** of peace...the **plan** of the church's mission. (John Paul II: *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, #27)

The whole Body of Christ, head and members, celebrates the liturgy. (STL, 10, 24, 25; CCC 1140)

Roman Catholic identity is multifaceted:

- We are members of a particular parish
- We live in a particular diocese
- Guided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Members of the Roman Catholic Church universal
- Members of the Body of Christ with all baptized believers
- Members of the human family, created in God's image
- We live out our discipleship as members of families, as inheritors of a particular cultural or ethnic heritage, as residents of a municipality/neighborhood, as employers/employees, residents of a country, members of the human family

POPE FRANCIS CALLS FOR RENEWAL OF SACRED MUSIC TRADITION

<http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/03/04/popefranciscallsforrenewalofsacredmusictradition/1296501>

(Vatican Radio) Pope Francis on Saturday received the participants in a major international conference on sacred music, a half-century after the promulgation of the Conciliar document, *Musicae sacram* on music in the sacred liturgy.

Over 400 people taking part in the gathering organized by the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for Culture around the theme: “Music and the Church: Cult and Culture Fifty Years After *Musicae Sacram*” met in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace to hear the Holy Father.

“Certainly,” said Pope Francis, “the encounter with modernity and the introduction of [vernacular] tongues into the Liturgy stirred up many problems: of musical languages, forms and genres.”

The Holy Father went on to say, “Sometimes a certain mediocrity, superficiality and banality have prevailed, to the detriment of the beauty and intensity of liturgical celebrations.”

The Pope encouraged the various actors in the field of liturgical music -- from composers, conductors, musicians and choristers, to liturgical animators -- to do their best to contribute to the renewal of sacred music and liturgical chant, especially as far as the quality of sacred music is concerned.

“To facilitate this process,” Pope Francis said, “we need to promote proper musical education, especially for those who are preparing to become priests -- in dialogue with the musical trends of our time, with the demands of the different cultural areas, and with an ecumenical attitude.”

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WHAT IS SACRED MUSIC?

To give an answer to the question, “What is sacred music?,” we *must* answer that it is the great treasury of music, written over the ages by the greatest composers for use in the sung liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, beginning with Gregorian melodies and continuing on through the polyphonic pieces of the middle ages and the renaissance, up to the orchestral settings of the last three centuries and into our own times; it is simple for the singing for the congregation and more elaborate as the degree of musicianship increases. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical, “*Musicae sacrae disciplina*,” beautifully summarized the role of sacred music:

“Thus, at the instance and under the sponsorship of the Church, sacred music, through the course of centuries, has traversed a long road by which, though sometimes slowly and laboriously, it has finally reached the heights: from the simple and natural Gregorian modes, which are, moreover, quite perfect in their kind, to great and even magnificent works of art which not only human voices, but also the organ and other musical instruments embellish, adorn and amplify almost endlessly. Just as this progress in the art of music shows clearly how dear to the heart of the Church it was to make divine worship more resplendent and appealing to Christian peoples, so too it made clear why the Church also must, from time, to time, impose a check lest its proper purposes be exceeded and lest, along with the true progress, an element profane and alien to divine worship creep into sacred music and corrupt it.”

LITURGICAL SINGING

The gift of song comes from God.

1. Song has both individual and communal dimensions (Who would RECITE “Happy Birthday”???)
2. Expresses well the sacramental presence of God to his people
3. Music does what words alone cannot do. It is capable of expressing a dimension of meaning and feeling that words alone cannot convey. (STL, #124)

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

The study of the liturgy, through the lens of liturgical theology, has led us to acknowledge the principle of *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*.

Law of Prayer and Law of Belief expanded – Some liturgical theologians want to expand the principle to incorporate the aspect of *Lex Vivendi*. Expanding the principle to include the third aspect deepens this profound truth. Law of Prayer → Law of Belief → Law of Life
As we Worship → So we Believe → So we live

Liturgy is a corporate act of worship. We cease being individuals and become one body, as St. Paul points out. Because of this transformation, we offer our very selves to God. We know we – whether priest, deacon or lay – can not arbitrarily change what we do in liturgy. We can’t substitute readings, prayers, vesture or liturgical color. What we have is a gift from the Church, a gift from Christ himself. We are partaking in something that is beyond us. The liturgy is not ours to invent but to celebrate. The words of St. John strike through: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song is united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy.” (S.C., #112)

“Therefore 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.” (S.C., #112-C)

“Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people.” (S.C., #113)

“The power of sacred music increases the honor given to God by the Church in union with Christ, its Head. Sacred music likewise helps to increase the fruits of the faithful, moved by the sacred harmonies, derive from the holy liturgy. These fruits, as daily experience and many ancient and modern literary sources show, manifest themselves in a life and conduct worthy of a Christian.” (Musicae Sacrae, #32)

“St. Augustine, speaking of chants characterized by “beautiful voice and most apt melody,” says: “I feel that our souls are moved to the ardor of piety by the sacred words more piously and powerfully when these words are sung than when they are not sung, and that all the affections of our soul in their variety have modes of their own in song and chant by which they are stirred up by an indescribable and secret sympathy.” (M.S., #33)

“The Christian faithful who gather together as one to await the Lord’s coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Singing is the sign of the heart’s joy.” (GIRM, #39)

“Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly. Although it is not always necessary (e.g. in weekday Masses) to sing all the texts that are of themselves meant to be sung, every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people is not absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on holy days of obligation.” (GIRM, #40).

“In choosing of the parts actually to be sung, however, preference should be given to those that are of greater importance and especially to those to be sung by the priest or the deacon or the lector, with the people responding, or by the priest and people together.” (GIRM, #40-A)

“Music and song are more than an embellishment of worship; they are themselves part of the liturgical action. Solemn sacred music is not therefore a kind of addition that frames the liturgy and makes it more pleasing, but an important means of active participation in worship.” Pope Benedict XVI, Regensburg, September 2006

“All other things being equal, Gregorian chant hold 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 the faithful. Since faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is fitting that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, set to the simpler melodies.” (GIRM, #41) (STL, #61-66)

The repertory we sing over time should foster a well-rounded Catholic identity:

Why do we sing? To express/enhance what words alone cannot!

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| - gratitude, awe, praise, wonder | - lament, contrition, sorrow, grief |
| - consolation, mercy assurance | - joy, confidence, enlightenment |
| - faith, hope and love | - communion, inter-connectedness, solidarity |
| - purpose, commitment, endurance | - supplication, petition |

What do we sing? Categories of Repertory/Styles

- Proper texts of the liturgy: introits, acclamations, responses, antiphons, dialogues. Singing IS worship!
- Psalms: Judeo-Christian heritage; Worship is grounded in scripture
- Gregorian chant: universal church, communion of saints, Catholic musical heritage
- Strophic hymns: catechesis, story-telling, ecumenical
- Contemporary music: Contemporary (Websters) -- living or occurring at the same time. By definition, all music is contemporary because it is being offered at the moment. Newly composed music must fit criteria of sacred music and sorted through Pastoral, liturgical and musical criteria.
- Music of multiple cultures: makeup of particular parishes / reflection of community

How do we sing? Musical forms

- Hymns and acclamations: baptismal unity and dignity, corporate identity
- Dialogic forms:
 - o Refrain/verse -- diversity of ministries, listening and responding, work / rest
 - o Dialogue: invitation and response
 - o Litany: Short, variable invocation, short, consistent response (Kyrie and Agnus Dei)

- Antiphonal: Alternation in the singing of a text, i.e., choir/assembly (Gloria, Creed)
- Choral/Solo/Instrumental music: God is revealed in beauty. **Listening IS participation.**

To Whom Do We Sing?

- *God*: Father, Judge, Creator, Fount of Wisdom, Ground of being, Remembering God
- *Jesus*: Teacher, Healer, Merciful Savior, Son of God, Redeemer, Incarnate Word
- *One another*: Summoning, Sending, Admonishing, Encouraging, Consoling
- *The “world”*: Proclaiming Good News, expressing solidarity, inviting

What makes for an effective, balanced, well-rounded parish repertory?

- Stability, familiarity and repetition
- “Core” music ministry: either same music at all parish Masses or *at least* same ordinaries. What do we say to the world when we divide into groups based upon musical taste?
- Repertory that is familiar to all worshipers in the parish
- Music of the larger Catholic traditions
- A variety of musical forms: introits, strophic hymns, refrain/verse, acclamations, ostinato, litany
- Usage of Latin and other languages as needed pastorally
- Texts reflecting the breadth of Catholic theology (authentic texts), ecclesiology and mission

In Harmony with the Liturgy

SC 112: Sacred music is to be considered the more holy the more closely connected it is with the liturgical action, whether making prayer more pleasing, promoting unity of minds, or conferring greater solemnity upon the sacred rites.

STL 125: The role of music is to serve the needs of the Liturgy and not to dominate it, seek to entertain, or draw attention to itself or the musicians.

Chirograph 5: Indeed, liturgical music must meet the specific prerequisites of the Liturgy: full adherence to the text it presents, synchronization with the time and moment in the Liturgy for which it is intended, appropriately reflecting the gestures proposed by the rite. The various moments in the Liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God’s marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorrow for the experience of human suffering which, however, faith opens to the prospect of Christian hope.