

Liturgical Music

In the Light of Conciliar and Post Conciliar Liturgical
Documents

Lit 81

Simon P. Kyambadde

April 2005

©2004 by Simon Peter Kyambadde

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from Trafford Publishing (Europe) Limited, former St. Mary's Church of Ireland building, Mary Street, Drogheda, County Louth, Republic of Ireland, Phone ++353 41 9831262 Email info.eu@trafford.com Fax ++35341 9831 206 Website www.trafford.com

Contents

INTRODUCTION	8
THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY	9
REQUIREMENTS OF GOOD MUSIC	11
CO-OPERATION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT ROLES IN THE CELEBRATION	12
OFFICES AND MINISTRIES FOR LITURGICAL MUSIC	13
<i>The pastor</i>	13
<i>The choir master</i>	17
<i>The choir</i>	18
<i>The cantor</i>	19
<i>The congregation</i>	19
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF LITURGICAL MUSIC	20
<i>Why do we need to evaluate liturgical music?</i>	20
<i>First Criterion: Doctrinal Content</i>	22
<i>Second Criterion: Musical Quality</i>	24
<i>Third Criterion: Liturgical suitability</i>	26
<i>Fourth Criterion: Pastoral Judgement</i>	27
PLACE AND FUNCTION OF MUSIC IN THE DIFFERENT LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS	28
<i>Holy Mass</i>	28
<i>Celebration of Sacraments and Sacramentals</i>	32
<i>Use of Music in the Liturgy of the Hours</i>	34
<i>Music and the Liturgical Year</i>	36
<i>Music as an instrument of inculturation</i>	37

Bibliographical References:

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 112-121

“Music” in, DOL, 500-538

Edward Folley, “Music, Liturgical”, in *Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, pp. 854-870.

Edward J. Mckenna, “Music Ministries”, in *Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, pp. 852-854.

American Bishops’ Conference, *Liturgical Music Today...*

American Bishops’ Conference, *Music in Catholic Worship...*

Jan Michael Joncas, “Liturgy and Music”, in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*. Vol. II, *Fundamental Liturgy*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997, 281-321.

Robert R. Grimes, “Music, Styles of Liturgical”, in *Dictionary of Sacramental Theology*, pp. 870-876.

SCDW. “Musicam Sacram, (Instruction on Music in the Liturgy),” In *Vatican Council II: Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, pp. 80ff.

The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource, pp. 269-312ff.

J. Galineau, “Music and Singing in the Liturgy”, in *The Study of the Liturgy*, by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, eds., London: SPCK, 1983. Pp. 440-454.

Alan Dunstan, “Hymnody in Christian Worship”, in *The Study of the Liturgy*, by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey

Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, eds., London: SPCK, 1983. Pp. 454-465.

William A. Bauman, *The Ministry of Music: A Guide for the Practicing Church Musician*, the Liturgical Conference, 1979.

Lucien Deiss, *Spirit and Song of the New Liturgy*, (translated by Lyla L. Haggard and Michael L. Mazzarese), Cincinnati, World Library of Sacred Music, 1970. [this book has a pastoral approach to Liturgical Music. In particular it gives the theological and liturgical meaning of the singable parts of the Mass]

Alec Robertson, *Christian Music*, New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963. [Robertson has a historical approach to liturgical music. *Christian Music* also constitutes vol. 125 of the Twentieth Century Encyclopædia of Catholicism, under section XII: Catholicism and the Arts].

Alec Robertson, *Music of the Catholic Church*, London: Burns & Oates, 1961. [Historical Approach].

Periodicals

Anonymous. "African Liturgical Music." In *AFER* 2(1966) 130ff.

Carroll, K. "African Music." In *AFER* 4(1961) 301ff.

Hastings, A. "Sacred Music and Liturgy (Instruction 1958-excerpts) In *AFER* 3(1959) 203ff.

Kealy, S. "Music in a well Prepared Liturgy." In *AFER* 2(1972) 140ff.

- Mpunga, S. "Music Reform in Tanzania." In *AFER* 1(1968) 47ff.
- Mpunga, S. "African Church Music." In *AFER* 4(1968) 372ff.
- Van Thiel, P. "Divine Worship and African Church Music I." In *AFER* 1(1961) 73ff
- Van Thiel, P. "Divine Worship and African Church Music II." In *AFER* 2(1961) 144ff.
- Van Thiel, P. "Text, Tone and Tune in African Sacred Music (Linguistic Aspect)." In *AFER* 3(1964) 250ff.
- Van Thiel, P. "African Singing and Dancing in Divine Worship." In *AFER* 4(1967) 341ff.
- Judith Marie Kubick, "Using J.L. Austin's Performative Language Theory to Interpret Ritual Music-Making", in *Worship* 73(July 1999) 310-331.

Annotated bibliography

Adaptation of music for non-western cultures SC 118-19; GIRM 19; LMT 54-55; (RL 40, 42. The Alleluia GIRM 37-39; Giapp 36; LM 23; GNLY 28; CB 371; MCW 55. Appropriateness of music SC 121; MC" 10-21, 26-38; LMT 12-13. Music chants SC 116-117; GIRM 19, 36-40; MCW 64-69. Communion song GIRM 17, 56, 119; MCW 48, 62, 72; LMT 18. Composers of music C 121; MCW 50-51, 70-78; LMT 26. Copyright issues of music MCW 78; LMT 70-71. Music in ecumenical services DE 111, 118. Entrance and recessional songs, GIRM 17, 25-26, 83; MCW 44-49, 60-62, 73; LMT 18-19. General principles of music SC 112-114; GIRM 19; MCW 23-41; LMT 6-15; DMC 31; MCW 66. Lamb of God GIRM 17, 56, 113, 195, 226; DMC 31; MCW 68, 74; LMT 20.

Music from Lent through Easter Sunday PS 18-19, 29, 42, 50, 61, 69-70, 86-87, 91. Litanies MCW 74; LMT 20. Lord Have Mercy GIRM 30, 87, 215; MCW 65; LMT 21. Offertory song GIRM 17, 50, 100; MCW 71, LMT 19. Responsorial psalm GIRM 17, 36; DMC 46; MCW 63. Supplementary songs MCW 70-74. Translation of music CP 36-37.

INTRODUCTION

In the late stage of their priestly formation seminarians usually already have a wide experience with liturgical music. Some will have studied music in the minor seminaries. Others may have served and still serve as choir masters, conductors and instrumentalists, sometimes even as composers. Many have guided others in singing during the pastoral work. Others may still be going out to communities around the seminary to teach music. To propose at such a stage the study of music and liturgy may sound as somewhat superfluous. And yet there several reasons why it is not a waste of time. They can learn the or improve on the ability to learn whether or not music is fit for Christian worship, the ability to involve others in the planning of music and celebration, the integration of music with inculturation endeavours, a greater appreciation of the importance of music and worship, the involvement of the parish community with higher levers such as the deanery, diocese or even national level, in matters regarding liturgical music, the ability to appreciate the ecumenical dimension of singing, and the ability to make music serve the liturgy and not overpower it.

The topic here is not a obviously not a study of music in the sense of learning new songs, no of learning how read music or play instruments. As a matter of fact many students have considerable knowledge in these areas. It is instead a study of liturgical music in its various aspects;

dogmatic principles, liturgical, pastoral and ecumenical aspects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY¹

Music promotes active participation. It is a unifying element to the congregation.² It adds beauty to the ceremony and makes the celebration livelier.³ It elevates the spirit to the divine realities.⁴ Good liturgical music attracts people to worship. Many small denominations actually know this truth and exploit it to advantage by dedicating themselves to good singing and making sure that their singing is heard.

In the liturgy music also helps to create degrees of solemnity for the different celebration. Just as in ordinary

¹ SC 121, MCW 10-21; 26-38; LMT 12-13.

² "...the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown, *the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices...*" *Musicam Sacram*, 5.

³ "Sacred music, being an integral part of the liturgy... enhances the beauty and splendor of the ceremonies of the Church." Pius X, Motu Proprio *Tra le Sollecitudini* November 22, 1903. "The dignity and lofty purpose of sacred music consist in the fact that its lovely melodies and splendor beautify and embellish the voices of the priest who offers Mass and of the Christian people who praise the Sovereign God." Pius XII, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*, December 25, 1955. Doc. Cath., vol 53(1956), col. 75.

⁴ "Indeed through this form... minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites, the the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem." *Musicam Sacram*, 5.

life a person has clothes to wear while at work, or travelling and on very special occasions, so too in worship we make a difference between celebrating Good Friday, from celebrating Christmas, a funeral from a wedding. This differentiation can be done with the help of the type and number of songs we sing. The less important occasions are celebrated with less singing, and the more important occasions with correspondingly more singing. Elaborate pieces may be reserved for the most solemn occasions.

Music, when well organised, can have the effect of making people more attentive, or remembering for a long time certain teachings learnt through singing. Thus music increases the effectiveness of certain texts. Music that is well sang is an expression of loving praise to God who has granted such gifts.

Music can create an atmosphere conducive to worship. Many people know the trick of creating an atmosphere with the help of music. Our ancestors had songs for different occasions. People grinding millet, rowing in a boat or felling a tree with manual sows could use a song to break the monotony of the work. A mother creates a peaceful mood to a child with a lullaby, sending it to sleep. Some people milk their animals with background music that makes the animals mellow and peaceful. Filmmakers use background music extensively to create a background. Even local medicine men use music to work themselves into frenzy, or to “call the spirits”. In the liturgy too music can be used to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer. The atmosphere required is that of making people pray better. This is a most important point. One may achieve many other goals with liturgical

music, but if the music fails to help people pray then it is better not to have it at all.

REQUIREMENTS OF GOOD MUSIC

In order to achieve the things outlined above liturgical music needs to be well-planned. Secondly, the singers need to have all the equipment necessary.

In the first place there should be planning and practice. Planning ought to be made well and ahead of time. It should take into consideration the occasion to be celebrated, the rite itself and its various parts, the hymns available, the possibility of learning new hymns and even the possibility of composition. The choir needs to practice, sometimes even the familiar hymns. Instruments to be used should also be involved in the practice. Sometimes it is helpful to note the appropriate keys for the respective practice, so that songs are not started too high or too low.

Those concerned should see to it that the necessary equipment are available. Hymnbooks should be kept neat. The fewer hymnbooks containing the necessary books the better. papers should be kept in folders. Music files have the advantage over hymnbooks because they can take in new hymns as these are acquired. Instruments such as organs, drums, guitars, shakers, pianos, violins, can be used. Whatever promotes authentic worship is fit for the liturgy. efforts should be made to acquire good musical instruments. Proper care and maintenance ought to be made of instruments. A choir also requires music stands for the use of the choir conductor. Where possible guitarists and violinists also need stands. Ideally stands

should have flaps that hold papers or books in place. They should be distinct from the ambo. Music choir dress where affordable adds to the dignity and beauty of a choir. But even without choir dress members should be particularly neat. The conductor should be extra-neat as befits his or her role. There ought to be decent means of displaying the hymns to be sang. Numbers painted on wood cardboard pieces can be made to slide on a display board to indicate the pages in a hymn book. There are modern ways of displaying hymn such as projecting the number from an electronic gadget on the wall long enough for the people to find it in the hymnbook and then switching it off. There are also projectors that cast the words of the hymn on a screen, a few lines at a time, until the whole hymn is sang. But these require that the hymns are printed on transparent plastic sheets and that one has a the appropriate projector in a place where there is electricity. Obviously many African rural parishes cannot afford such means. In some areas hymns can also simply be announced by word of mouth.

CO-OPERATION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT ROLES IN THE CELEBRATION

All those concerned with singing should work in a co-ordinated way under the guidance of the pastor. These include composers, choir masters and other conductors, choir members, cantors, soloists, instrumentalists, music experts that may be employed by the parish, etc. ideally they should form a committee that meets regularly.

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES FOR LITURGICAL MUSIC

THE PASTOR

A minimum of music knowledge would be recommended for every pastor so that he can add variety and beauty to the manner he conducts the liturgy. his role in guiding liturgical music is fourfold:

In the first place as presider⁵ he can sing the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, preface, eucharistic prayer (occasionally), doxology and concluding prayer. Many pastors refrain from singing for various reasons: it may be lack of knowledge of reading music, or lack of a good voice; it may be that the congregation does not know the appropriate response, or it may be fear of making mistakes, fear to introduce what is not familiar, laziness to make the necessary practice or lack of appreciation of the importance of music in the liturgy.

A minimum of singing does not require great skill. Many presidential prayers can be sung without the necessity of reading music. Some common melodies can be sung from memory. However, if a presider is totally “a-musical” it is preferable not to sing.⁶

⁵ *Musicam Sacram*, 26.

⁶ “If, however, a choice is to be made, and the priest or minister does not possess a voice suitable for the proper execution of the singing, he can render without singing one or more of the more difficult parts which concern him, reciting them in a loud and distinct voice. However, this must not be done merely for the convenience of the priest or minister.” *Musicam Sacram*, 8. To this

There are no strict rules regarding the manner of singing presidential prayers. Generally all the not all presidential prayers should be sung. The choice of those to be sung should respect the degree of solemnity of the occasion. The words of consecration should only on very solemn occasions, and only by one who can sing them very clearly and well. In the second place in the order of solemnity is the singing of the Preface and Doxology, that is, the beginning and conclusion of the eucharistic prayer. In the third place are the orations: the opening prayer, the prayer over the gifts and the concluding prayer together with the final blessing. Normally the orations should be sang as a set: do not sing just the opening prayer without the other two. Or should one decide to sing only at the concluding prayer. Again one should better use the same music style for the three orations.

The hymns that follow the orations should preferably harmonise with them. It is a bit out of place to recite the Sanctus after the presider has sung the Preface. The sung Doxology should be followed with a sung Amen. When the introduction to the Lord's Prayer is sung it is best if the Our Father is sung with the same melody.

It is important that the presider who intends to sing does enough practice. He has to bear in mind that since he

instruction Lucien adds humorously, "The Church no longer prefers a solo by a minister who, as in the *Ite missa est*, for example, would begin on an arbitrary note, immediately "derail" to another key, and then slide up and down the twelve-tone scale as if on ice, and eventually come to rest on the final note like a plane crash-landing. Instead, the Instruction would prefer today that the priest simply states: "The mass is ended, go in peace." *Spirit and Song of the New Liturgy*, p. 28.

sings alone he lacks the support of other voices. Clarity of the words demands total control of the music. Often it will be necessary for him to practice aloud in a quiet place. If necessary he should agree with the organist beforehand on the appropriate keys.

Besides those parts which the presider sings alone it is also important that he sings with the rest of the congregation. In this it is important that he does not take on what others could do. In some areas it is the same minister who chooses the hymns, announces the next hymn, intones it; yet there are people in the congregation who could, in collaboration with him, have taken on this role. Nevertheless, the minister does well to sing with the people, when he is not performing some presidential role. When he is, then he should focus on that. At offertory it is better to concentrate on the act of offering. At the breaking of bread he should not be distracted by the singing of the Agnus Dei. At communion he should focus on giving communion and not on the communion song.

The pastor as an administrator also has a role towards the choir. It may be he to solicit new members to join the choir. He also sees to the financing of the needs of the choir. This includes the buying of all the necessary equipment, the availability of expert aid and training of members, remuneration of those especially employed to assist the choir, financing of music competitions, provision of occasional choir outings to boost the moral of the members, etc. The pastor need not draw from his own resources. Rather, he mobilises the parish community to contribute to the needs of the choir.

He can also play a role in ensuring the active participation of the faithful in the singing, so that they are not like spectators while the choir acts. This may be achieved if the choir includes simple well-known songs. The availability of music literature to all the congregation encourages others to sing. Often it is necessary to remind the people to join in the singing.

The pastor should also promote music with other parishes and deaneries through exchange of choirs, competitions, deanery choir meetings and the sharing of expert trainers. The pastor should also try to integrate the choir into the liturgical committee.

He also has a role as a spiritual guide to the choir. He is ultimately responsible for the spiritual and liturgical formation of the choir,⁷ so that the singing does not prevent the choir members from participating in prayer. He should see to it that as many of the choir members as possible also receive the sacraments. He can organise recollections and retreats for the choir. Also he sees to it that members learn the structure and function of each liturgical part. He sees to it that there is discipline in the choir: that their moral behaviour is exemplary, that married couples are respected, that the unmarried relate maturely with each other, that parents can have no cause for worry about their children who belong to the choir and that bad elements are excluded regardless of their contribution.

⁷ Musicam Sacram, 24.

THE CHOIR MASTER

Some of the basic skills required by a choir master are the ability to read music, ability to conduct, fair knowledge of the liturgy, the ability to co-ordinate with all the others involved in the singing: the presider, the singers, instrumentalists, cantors and readers. His roles include selection of hymns to be sung, conducting, summoning the members to practice before the actual singing, seeing to the orderliness of the choir, unless someone else is appointed for this role. He may also assume the immediate discipline of the choir.

When selecting hymns to be sung the choir master should consider their suitability for the respective part of the liturgy, for the occasion being celebrated, for their harmony with the present liturgical season, and that they are in harmony with the whole liturgical function. He should consider the length of the hymns: that they do not disproportionately prolong a particular part of the liturgy, or that they are sufficiently long to cover the respective part. For instance offertory hymns should ideally last the duration of offertory, the “Lamb of God” should cover the breaking of bread, a communion hymn should cover the time of communion.⁸ But where it is necessary another hymn may be chosen to supplement a shorter hymn for the same liturgical part. In selecting of hymns the choir master should also consider the competence of his singers.⁹ Difficult hymns should not be chosen for people who cannot sing them. he also considers the

⁸ GILM 17, 56, 119; MCW 48, 62, 72; LMT 18.

⁹ Musicam Sacram, 9.

degree of solemnity.¹⁰ The choir master should also give room for silence where appropriate.¹¹

When conducting the choir master should avoid showing off, or distracting the congregation. His role is to guide the choir and not to entertain. Certainly it is good to see a choir master who conducts with skill and art, even style. But even all that should be used solely for the purpose of guiding the choir not entertaining the congregation. a choir master should conduct only when it is necessary. Very familiar songs can be sung without much direction. It is sufficient for the choir to know the key. The number of verses to be sung can be indicated on the music board. Alternatively the parts to be sung can also be included in the announcement. For the recession open “We Pray and sing to the Lord” hymn 60, stanza 3 and 5...” A good choir master is able to change the key if a wrong one has been intoned. He should regulate the instruments when necessary, indicate clearly and deliberately when to stop, watch the presider and not prolong some parts unnecessarily, etc.

THE CHOIR¹²

The members of the choir should be attentive to the conductor, regular in attending practice, punctual for the liturgical functions, preferably arriving before the rest of the congregation.

¹⁰ Musicam Sacram, 29-31.

¹¹ Musicam Sacram, 17.

¹² SC, 14, 29, 114-115; GIRM 63, 274; CB 39-41; DMC 22; MCW 36; LMT 32; EACW 83.

THE CANTOR¹³

The sings those parts that require singing by one person. Obviously a cantor should be a person endowed with a beautiful musical voice. When a choir has both at least a male and female cantor this is of advantage. The ability to read music is an added advantage to a cantor. The cantor sings such parts as the responsorial psalm, Alleluia, prayers of the faithful, or, on occasion some elaborate piece that is entirely or in part sung in solo. The cantor should not pay too much attention to the beauty of the voice to the detriment of audibility of the words. Sometimes cantors may sing the same part in harmony. A cantor may also intone the hymns in the absence of instruments.

THE CONGREGATION¹⁴

The congregation should make an effort to join in the singing.¹⁵ They should listen as they sing, to keep in unison with each other.¹⁶ They should assist the choir as much as they can through financial assistance, contribution of new members: parents encouraging their children to join, spouses allowing the singing party to join, individuals who can sing volunteering, or the congregation to take a lead in the absence of the choir.

¹³ *Musicam Sacram*, 21 GIRM 36, 57, 63, 64, 90, 274; GILM 56; LCW 35; LMT 68-69.

¹⁴ “To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns...”. SC, 30.

¹⁵ *Musicam Sacram*, 16.

¹⁶ *Musicam Sacram*, 14.

There are those in the congregation who for various reasons cannot sing: those whose attempt to sing produces disharmony, people who lack a sense of music, those who drag songs or those who can't keep the bit and go ahead of others, or those who try to harmonise and make a mess of the hymn. They are also those who sing too loudly and cover the rest of the voices.

Of course the congregation is not expected to sing as well as a trained choir. A certain amount of imperfection must be tolerated out of charity. Active participation is more important for worship than musical excellency. However, every effort should be made to improve the singing of the congregation. Moreover, someone might do well to keep quiet rather than try to sing and confuse the rest. At least one whose voice is not too good does well to sing in a subdued tone.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

WHY DO WE NEED TO EVALUATE LITURGICAL MUSIC?

Many composers feel frustrated when anyone suggests that their music ought to be evaluated. That is quite understandable. Any work of art is also a work created through much pain. That pain brings about a certain amount of attachment on the part of the composer. One would hate to see anyone who has not gone through the same pain of bringing about the work of art criticise it. Very often the critic may consider as defects what in the mind of the artist are nuances. The critic needs to be both very well informed in music and empathic to the

feelings of the artist. Since that is not always the case it is natural that the artist feels apprehensive against any suggestion of censorship.

At the same if we are to be objective we cannot fail to see the need to have some censorship on music that is composed for public worship. Such music is different from secular music. With secular music one does not need to listen to an album if it is not one's liking or religious sentiments. Since liturgy is a communal affair, once music is accepted for the liturgy then those that attend in that church must be made to listen to it and even to sing it whether it is to their liking or not, whether it helps them to pray or it distracts them. That is why those responsible for conducting the liturgy should take it as their responsibility to see that the music accepted for worship promotes rather than degrades worship, attracts and edifies rather than send away or scandalise the worshipers.

Not every song composed for the liturgy is worthy of worship. Some music is composed by people lacking in music skills. Naturally these people are least likely to admit that their products are substandard. Other music may contain doctrinal errors, even if it is musically beautiful. It is not always the case that those endowed with the gift of composition have at the same time deep faith or sound doctrine. Some music may not respect the liturgical structure or harmony. It may emphasise areas that are of relative liturgical importance or diminish those that are more important. Some may be of very good quality but beyond the appreciative capacity of a particular congregation. An originally good composer may with time produce pieces that are low in quality

motivated with the desire to fill the album and to make quick money.

And so there is always a need to censor church music, for there is such a thing as “bad” liturgical music. This includes music that a particular congregation cannot understand, or appreciate; music that “swallows” the liturgical text so that an “Our Father” is no longer recognisable as such for instance; music whose content gives false doctrine,¹⁷ music that is ill-fitted to the particular liturgical action and music that drags the sacred into the profane. On the other hand there is good liturgical music: music that promotes active participation, that respects the integrity of the rite, that gives true honour to God, etc. The following are the criteria of judging liturgical music.

FIRST CRITERION: DOCTRINAL CONTENT

The first criterion regards the message of the words of the hymn.¹⁸ Several questions can be asked: does the song express truths of our faith? Does it edify the worshiper listening to it? Is there any line or part that needs

¹⁷ A song like “Olulimi lwange leero lomyuse, luliko omusaayi gwomulokozi” might tempt a child to examine its tongue after communion to see whether indeed it is true, the tongue is red with the blood of the Saviour. That is why that verse was removed from the song.

¹⁸ SC, 121. Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to develop sacred music and to increase its store of treasures. Let them produce compositions having the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, not confining themselves to works that can be sung only by large choirs, but providing also for the needs of small choirs and for the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful.

modification or elimination? Or should the entire hymn be excluded for use in the liturgy? These are hard decisions, and one wishes that there is no need to disappoint any composer on these grounds. But when it is necessary to edit, prune or reject a hymn the liturgy commission in charge of music does a disservice to the Church by keeping a bad hymn merely in order not to antagonise its composer.

A useful principle in composing liturgical music is that the closer one is to the words of Scripture the safer and freer from censorship one is likely to be.¹⁹ No one can reasonably reject a hymn based on the words of the psalm 23 (the Lord is my Shepherd), even when the composer sometimes makes slight rearrangements to adjust the psalm to his music. Even when a song does not paraphrase the actual words of scripture, in general good liturgical music is inspired by some bible teaching or text. This does not of course exclude wholesome extra-biblical themes, particularly themes that express the values of the traditional culture.

Particular care needs to be taken when someone composes texts for the ordinary of the Mass. Songs such as the Our Father, the Creed, the gospel canticles, etc should not be so changed as to differ so much from the original text. The creed should remain a profession of the people's faith, just as the "Our Father" should remain the Lord's prayer with no additions or subtractions.

¹⁹ SC 121, MCW 50-51; 70-78; LMT 26.

SECOND CRITERION: MUSICAL QUALITY²⁰

The critique on liturgical music should not be a one-man job. It should be the work of several people with different roles corresponding to their knowledge and gifts. While the doctrinal content is done by one knowledgeable in Church doctrine, preferably but not exclusively a priest, the musical quality is best done by one who is knowledgeable in music. It can still be a priest but there is no reason to deprive some knowledgeable lay person of such a role that is not the prerogative of ordained ministry.

To say that the musical quality is to be judged by one who is knowledgeable in music is not to exclude all others who may not be actual music experts. After all liturgical music is meant to inspire the Christian community that is made up for the most part of people who have little expertise in music. Still these people may or may not be inspired by the songs. If each person were asked they might have their favourite songs and those that they like little. And so the community ultimately makes an evaluation of liturgical music regardless of whether they are experts or not. They may choose to sing certain songs more often than others. They may even abandon certain songs all together if these are not to their liking.

But the judgement of whether to accept or reject a song of a composer is not to be left to the mercy of the untrained, simply because it is not subjective. Just because someone does not like a particular hymn may not mean that there is anything wrong with that hymn. It

²⁰ See also *Music in Catholic Worship*, no. 26-29.

may in fact be the case that some other person considers the same hymn a masterpiece. Many people for instance have little taste for songs in minor keys, while others consider them with greater regard because they show real musical expertise. Care must therefore be taken that style is not confused with quality. A particular style may not be to the liking of someone; that does not mean that the quality is low. It is important always to remember with regard to musical quality that tastes differ.

Some of the questions to be asked in judging the musical quality are whether the words fit harmoniously and naturally to the music or whether they sound to be forced; is the music too much a mimic of cheap and popular tunes? Is it inspiring or banal? Is it really worthy of God? having said all this it must be admitted that in judging the music quality a certain amount of arbitrariness is unavoidable. That is why it is preferable to have more than one person giving their judgement on the music quality.

Whereas the person making a critique on the doctrinal content of a song or hymn need only to look at the text, the one who judges its music quality needs to listen to the actual music. Some particularly advanced musicians can already make a rough judgement of a song or hymn merely by looking at its music notation, but perhaps those are not many. The majority would need to hear the song sung or played; if not live at least on cassette, CD or other music media. It is therefore imperative that composers provide copies of music both in writing and on play-back media, while at the same time retain originals for themselves for preservation.

THIRD CRITERION: LITURGICAL SUITABILITY

A song may be rich in doctrine as well as beautiful as a work of art and yet be unsuitable for any part of liturgy, or for the particular part of liturgy for which it was composed. This is because liturgy has its own purpose, structure and direction. Each part in the Mass for instance has its relative importance in relation to other parts. The preparatory rite is less important than the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. So the important question to ask in judging the liturgical suitability is whether a particular hymn respects the relative position of the liturgical components. Does it prolong this particular part beyond proportion, or does it abbreviate it too much. A *Kyrie Eleison* that goes on and on gives undue emphasis on the opening rite. A good *Agnus Dei* is just long enough to cover the breaking of bread. An offertory hymn should not end at the first elevation of the host. The Germans have a Gloria that lasts the period of fastening one's shoelace. Another important question with regard to liturgical suitability is whether a hymn or song is "groupable" into some liturgical category. Some of these categories are entrance songs, meditation, communion, adoration, penance, marriage, liturgical seasons, etc. what kind of liturgical situation can the new hymn serve? Yet another question is whether the hymn respects liturgical role differentiation. The Our Father is a prayer for the whole community. Even when sang it should be such as can be sang not just by the choir but by everyone. So is the Creed. Acclamations and responses of the community should be easy to remember. A composition of a litany should have parts that the rest of the faithful can repeat. Music for eucharistical texts such as the Preface should

be simple enough to be sang with ease by an average pastor as far as music is concerned.

FOURTH CRITERION: PASTORAL JUDGEMENT

The pastoral judgement regards not so much the composition or publication of hymns as the selection of them for the celebration of any particular liturgical action. It consists of such questions as whether the selection of the music is such as this particular congregation can sing.²¹ Is it agreeable to their culture and mentality or is it felt as alien?²² Is it music that the people here and now like or not?²³ Is the music adapted to the age of the congregation? Children music for instance should be short, simple and sometimes repetitive.

²¹ "In selecting the kind of sacred music to be used, whether it be for the choir or the people, the capacities of those who are to sing the music must be taken into account." *Musicam Sacram*, 9.

²² One must note that inculturation does not mean the throwing away of good things that we have heard before. To sing new songs of our culture does not mean the exclusion of songs that we sang before. If a particular community is helped to pray with such traditional songs, there is no reason to exclude them habitually or to impose on them songs that they are unfamiliar with. Time should be taken to teach new songs, while at the same time space is given to the old and familiar if still helpful.

²³ "...the best music is not necessarily that which is considered best in the rubrics; it is that which is best for a particular congregation." Lucien Deiss, *Spirit and Song of the New Liturgy*, (translated by Lyla L. Haggard and Michael L. Mazzarese), Cincinnati, World Library of Sacred Music, 1970. P. 11.

PLACE AND FUNCTION OF MUSIC IN THE DIFFERENT LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

HOLY MASS

Composers of liturgical music need also to know the different parts of the liturgy and their relative importance. A simple course on the singable parts of the Mass might proceed by isolating these parts as well as grouping them in some logical order.

If we proceed chronologically the individual singable parts of the Mass are the entrance hymn, Kerie, Gloria, Collect and the response to it, the responsorial psalm, the gospel acclamation, the creed, prayers of the faithful, offertory song, prayer over the gifts, preface, Sanctus, eucharistic prayer, memorial acclamation, doxology, the Lord's prayer, "through him, with him...", Lamb of God, communion song, Post communion song, and recession. There are different ways of grouping these singable parts of the Mass.

One such way is distinguishing the Ordinary and Proper of the Mass. The Ordinary refers to the parts that come in every Mass. Their content remains the same in spite of different occasions. They are usually based on some biblical text or some particular Church teaching. They include the Kerie Eleison, Gloria (on Sundays and feast days), Creed, Sanctus, Our Father and Lamb of God.

The Proper of the Mass refers to the parts that change with the particular occasion celebrated. The content of the Proper is more fluid. The Proper includes the

entrance song, the Collect (if sang), the Responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, offertory song, communion song, post communion song and recession song. The advantage of making these categories is to point out to composers those invariable parts of the sang Mass that demand greater respect and less changing around of the text. Composers can also be encouraged to create at particular Mass style. One can compose an entire “Mass set”: sang texts of the Ordinary of the Mass that have the same stile. We have examples of such sets, for instance *Gaba* Mass, *Mass Taita*, Latin Mass, etc. The variable parts or parts that comprise the Proper reflect more the particular occasion celebrated: whether it is the season of Lent, whether it the celebration of a certain sacrament, whether it is the celebration of Christian funeral, etc.

There are other ways of categorising the singable parts. They can be grouped according to their liturgical function for instance.²⁴ *Acclamations and dialogues*²⁵ include the priest’s greeting: “the Lord be with you” and the response, the Amen following a prayer, the gospel acclamation, the introductory dialogue to the preface, the Sanctus, the acclamation of faith after consecration, the doxology after the Our Father, the wish for peach and its

²⁴ *Music in Catholic Worship* describes the grouping of the singable parts of Mass in terms of Ordinary and Proper: ‘...the formal distinction between the ordinary and proper parts of the Mass with regard to musical settings and distribution of roles is no longer retained. For this reason the musical settings of the past are usually not helpful models for composing truly liturgical pieces today.’ (no. 51).

²⁵ Regarding music for acclamations see *Music in Catholic Worship* no. 53-59; *Liturgical Music Today* 12-17.

response, the dismissal and its response “thanks be to God”. Acclamations are short shouts of joy by the whole assembly. They assent to God’s word and action. They also make some of the important parts of the Mass stand out such as the gospel, the eucharistic prayer and the Lord’s Prayer. Acclamations should be easy to learn by heart, sung spontaneously, rhythmically strong and melodically appealing.

The acclamation “The Lord be with you... and also with you” has the effect of drawing the attention of the people. It calls to the mind of the people the fact that they are at prayer, in the presence of the Lord. In affirming God’s presence it brings to mind several biblical texts: “I am the God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham...”,²⁶ “for I am with you to deliver you...”,²⁷ “...he is Emmanuel, God with us...”,²⁸ “Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you”²⁹, “...and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”³⁰ The Alleluia³¹ is a joyful welcome to the gospel. If not sung the alleluia should be omitted.³² The Sanctus is the people’s acclamation concluding the Preface. We join all the angels and saints to acclaim the Lord. Elaborate pieces of the Sanctus that exclude the people in the singing should

²⁶ Genesis 26:24.

²⁷ Jeremiah 30:10.

²⁸ Isaiah 7:14; 8:10; Matthew: 1:23.

²⁹ Luke 1:28.

³⁰ John 1: 14.

³¹ GIRM 37-39; Giapp 36, GILM 23; GNLY 28; CB 371; MCW 55.

³² GILM, 23.

not be used too often. The Memorial Acclamation of the Lord's passion and death is at the same time a hope in his return. Through it we support one another's faith in the paschal mystery. The great Amen is an assent to the eucharistic prayer making it our own. To be effective it should be augmented.

The purpose of procession songs is to create and sustain an awareness of community as well as to accompany some other liturgical activity. The entrance procession song creates an atmosphere of celebration. It puts people in the frame of mind to listen to the word. It promotes awareness of being a worshipping community. At the same time it reflects the occasion celebrated. The offertory song accompanies the procession and preparation of the gifts. On solemn occasions there can be more than one offertory song: one may be sung as the gifts are gathered, and another more rhythmic one may accompany the procession dance with which the gifts are taken to the altar. Care should be taken not to prolong the procession. The communion song unites the members that share the Lord's supper. It promotes awareness of the mystery partaken.³³

³³ *Music in Catholic Worship* remarks: 'Because they emphasise adoration rather than communion, most Benediction hymns are not suitable' (no. 62). That comment brings out clearly the important point of the communion of the assembly. It should not, however, be taken to mean that sentiments of awareness of the Lord's eucharistic presence and the due reverence to that presence are out of place at the time of communion. For it is by sharing in that one living bread that our communion is established.

The Responsorial psalm is part of the liturgy of the word.³⁴ It provides a biblical response to the first reading. Its mode of celebration should be as follows: when sung a) the cantor sings the parts while the congregation sings the response, or b) the cantor recites the parts while the people sing the response, or c) the organ can accompany the cantor who recites the parts, or d) the congregation may sing the whole psalm together, or e) the cantor may sing the whole psalm alone. When read the response should be announced clearly. The reader may repeat the response with the people if necessary. The responsorial psalm may be substituted with an alternative seasonal psalm, or with an appropriate psalm with music setting. Although it is a widespread practice to substitute the responsorial psalm with a hymn there is no mention made of this in the official books.

The Ordinary chants are part of the ordinary of the Mass in the old terminology. They are the Lord have mercy, the Glory to God, the Lord's Prayer, the Lamb of God and the Profession of faith. Singing of these parts should as much as possible respect the basic text, otherwise they are better recited.

CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS AND SACRAMENTALS

The choice of songs depends on whether the rite is celebrated within Mass or not. If a sacrament or sacramental is celebrated within Mass then the entrance hymn may be related to the sacrament or sacramental, if

³⁴ GILM, 19-22; GIRM 36.

the time of celebration in the liturgical calendar allows it. The post-communion and recessional hymns may also reflect the rite. Other parts of the Mass follow the rules regarding songs at Mass. During the rite itself it is important to distinguish between hymns that are integral to the rite and those that accompany the rite. If the rite is celebrated outside Mass, the opening hymn reflects the rite celebrated. Here too a distinction is to be made between the songs that are integral to the rite and those that accompany it.

At baptism the songs that accompany are the various processions: during the entry into the church, procession to the baptismal font, procession to the altar; during baptism if there are many people to baptise, during the explanatory rites if there are many people to baptism. The songs that are integral to the rite are the acclamation after the profession of faith, the blessing of the water if it is sung, and the intercessions and litany of the saints. At confirmation, during the anointing a hymn to the Holy Spirit may be sung. At the celebration of reconciliation, on a communal basis it is possible to sing accompanying hymns during individual confessions. After the individual confessions thanksgiving may be expressed with songs. During anointing of the sick, when several people are to be anointed, singing can take place at the laying on of hands, and at the anointing with the oil of the sick. At ordination the singing of the litany of the saints is integral to the rite. Moments of thanksgiving and exchange of peace may be accompanied. At matrimony wedding marches in and out of church are best accompanied with song or instrumental music. Liturgical rather than secular music is preferable in church. Couples should be guided regarding their choice of music. At funerals the various

processions with the bier are best accompanied with song: the entry into the church, the people walking around the coffin, the exit out of church and the procession to the grave. The singing of the Alleluia with the Benedictus is integral to the rite. at the lowering of the body into the grave it is appropriate to sing. During adoration the exposition of the sacrament is generally accompanied with a song. In the course of adoration it is usual to include some songs. Traditionally the Tantum Ergo and Divine Praises are integral to Benediction. The return of the sacrament of into the tabernacle is usually accompanied.

It is important to be equipped with the appropriate songs for various occasions. Accompanying songs should not unduly prolong the respective parts. Those parts that ought to be heard clearly should not be sung or accompanied, such as solemn vows, solemn promises, admonitions and exhortations by the minister, prayers, etc. sung parts that are integral to the rite should be particularly clear. In general one needs to study the respective rite and note the singable parts.

USE OF MUSIC IN THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS³⁵

Three questions are important with regard to singing during the liturgy of the hours: whether to sing, when to sing and how to sing. With regard to whether to the first one psalms in general are better sung than recited

³⁵ SC 93, 99; LMT 34-45; “The Psalms and Canticles: Morning and Evening Prayer of the Divine Office”, St. Albert’s Priory, 1975; Archdiocese of Chicago, “Psalms for Morning and Evening Prayer”, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1995.

whenever this is possible, for in their original form they were meant to be sung. Moreover singing makes them more beautiful, and it breaks monotony. However, when one celebrates the hours as an individual it is probably better not to sing.

People may sing the psalms when those that are participating are capable of singing. The amount of singing should be determined by the degree of solemnity of the occasion, and the nature of the community. For example some monastic communities always sing the psalms. The celebration of solemn vespers should involve more singing.

The manner of singing is determined by the degree of music training. The entire community need not be expert in singing. It is sufficient that there are a few that can lead the others. The different modes of singing include: a) one person or a few singing the stanzas while the rest sing the response. This in fact appears to have been the original style of congregational singing. It remains the easiest method of engaging the congregation. It is also practical where people do not have enough copies of the office. The antiphon at the end of the psalm is used as a response. Alternatively it may be substituted with other approved texts;³⁶ b) antiphonal singing is that where the congregation is divided into two groups which alternate the stanzas. Both groups together take the doxology and antiphons. This is suited to communities where the majority can sing. All actively take part in the singing of the psalms; c) “through-composed singing” is that in which the whole psalm is sung without the interruption

³⁶ GILH, 274.

of a refrain. The singer may be a soloist, a soloist and choir, the choir alone or the whole congregation in communities where all can sing. This form has the advantage of respecting the literary structure of the psalm, and of capturing its original emotion. One psalm or canticle may be sung using this method.

The music to be used in the singing of psalms depends also on the degree of knowledge of music of the people. The congregation may be taught a few tones for specific psalms. If they learn quickly these tones can be introduced at the beginning of the for that particular day. Well-known tones can be adapted to psalms or hymns of the same metre. The use of printed aids to singing of psalms affords a greater variety.

MUSIC AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR

It is not uncommon to find people singing hymns that are out of tune with the liturgical season. It may be because they have a particular liking for a hymn, or because the choir has a short supply of the appropriate hymns for the season, or due to ignorance regarding the importance of celebrating the liturgical seasons. Hymns ought to be appropriate to the respective seasons or occasions. It is sound human pedagogy and catechesis to take one thing at a time. We can assimilate one aspect at a time of the great mystery that comprises our faith. Music should help and not muffle the appreciation of each season. For this to happen it is important that people are given the necessary catechesis on the structure and meaning of the liturgical year, that they have an abundant supply of seasonal hymns, and that the liturgy is prepared and planned with the singers.

MUSIC AS AN INSTRUMENT OF INCULTURATION

“The people's own religious songs are to be encouraged with care so that in sacred devotions as well as during services of the liturgy itself, in keeping with rubrical norms and requirements, the faithful may raise their voices in song. In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, people have their own musical traditions and these play a great part in their religious and social life. Thus, in keeping with art. 39 and 40, due importance is to be attached to their music and a suitable place given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius.”³⁷
“With due consideration for the culture and ability of each congregation, great importance should be attached to the use of singing at Mass; but it is not always necessary to sing all the texts that are of themselves meant to be sung.”³⁸

Inculturation of African music does not mean total independence from the rich Church tradition of regarding music. Music is for the service of worship and not culture: what is good for worship should be retained. One has to bear in mind that there something universal and trans-cultural about music. Again some of the traditional tunes may be retained because they have an ecumenical role; they are used also in other Christian Churches, even if sometimes with different words.

³⁷ SC 118-119. See also Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy nos. 40-42.

GIRM 19; LMT 54-55; IRL 40-42.

³⁸ GIRM 19.

In the wake of Vatican II there has been much positive effort in the appreciation of cultural music and the composition of music for the liturgy using cultural tunes. This brings the liturgy closer to the people. The use of traditional instruments too appeals to them in ways that imported instruments do not. However, this music is sometimes faced with problems like poor recording facilities, lack of knowledge in codifying music with the result that compositions are not written and in time degenerate,³⁹ lack of enough censoring before music is allowed into the liturgy and lack of funds for publication of music books.

One of the possible solutions is the establishment of a *schola cantorum*⁴⁰ for African music. This could be done at the level an Episcopal Conference, where possible on a national level. But it can also be established at regional levels such as AMECEA or even at a continental level, that is SECAM. At such levels one would have the advantage of a variety of experts from all over Africa who can both compose and write music, a much wider selection of liturgical music, better recording facilities, liturgists that can do the censoring, libraries of sacred music can be set up with graded music: for Mass, for liturgy of the hours, music for accompanying sacred

³⁹ When the music is not written in music notation different teachers make modifications of the original composition thus gradually corrupting it.

⁴⁰ In the history of the Church the outbreak for liturgical music came with the establishment of music schools: the Canons of Laodicia A.D. 343-381 were the forerunners of Gregorian Chant. The latter came to be associated with Gregory the great A.D. 604 (see DD 18; PGR 18, n28) and has endured up till today.

functions, religious instrumental music, music from non-African cultures, etc.

