

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEMINARY

## SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

### PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS: ROMAN CATHOLIC LITURGICAL MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE VATICAN II

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There is a singing group in this Catholic church today, a singing group which calls itself "Wildflowers." The lead is a tall, square-jawed teen-aged boy, buoyant and glad to be here. He carries a guitar; he plucks out a little bluesy riff and hits some chords. With him are the rest of the Wildflowers. There is an old woman, wonderfully determined; she has long orange hair and is dressed country-and-western style. A long embroidered strap around her neck slings a big western guitar low over her pelvis. Beside her stands a frail, withdrawn fourteen-year-old boy, and a large Chinese man in his twenties who seems to want to enjoy himself but is not quite sure how to. He looks around wildly as he sings, and shuffles his feet. There is also a very tall teen-aged girl, presumably the lead singer's girl friend; she is delicate of feature, half-serene and half petrified, a wispy soprano. They straggle out in front of the altar and teach us a brand-new hymn.

It all seems a pity at first, for I have overcome a fiercely anti-Catholic upbringing in order to attend Mass simply and solely to escape Protestant guitars. Why am I here? Who gave these nice Catholics guitars? Why are they not mumbling in Latin and performing superstitious rituals? What is the Pope thinking of?

So Annie Dillard in an essay entitled "An Expedition to the Pole" describes her experience of a solitary yet representative sample of contemporary Catholic liturgical music practice in the United States. My intent in the following presentation is to trace how this practice got that way. Because of limitations of space and competence, I will concentrate on English-language composition intended for use in the Roman Rite in the United States in the past three decades.

I will first record and explore the mandate given to liturgical music composers in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Next I will sketch four broad compositional strategies in response to the mandate. Third, I will offer a concise chronology of three phases of compositional production over the past thirty years.<sup>2</sup> Finally, I will suggest some of the issues facing contemporary liturgical music composers for the Roman Rite as they continue to refine their craft.

I must confess at the outset some difficulties confronting my presentation. The task of the historian is daunting: not only to present an accurate listing of events in a foundational chronology but to configure these data into a framework of interpretation, to suggest correlations and causes that may or may not have been evident to those enacting the events, to declare what was "going forward" and what was "in decline" in the period under investigation.<sup>3</sup> Though my intent in the presentation is broadly historical, I believe the events being explored are still too close to the present for any global assessment. Nor can I claim an Olympian detachment from the events being described; as a published church music composer still producing compositions intended for the church's worship and as a co-editor of a widely employed hymnal (*Gather*), I might be accused of (at best) reportage and (at worst) special pleading in the following essay. I can only plead that I have tried to account for my biases and exercise sympathetic insight into stances toward liturgical music composition that are not my own. How well I have succeeded in this account I leave to others to judge.

#### 1. The Mandate

On 4 December 1963 when the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy was promulgated by Pope Paul VI in union with the Fathers of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, an agenda was set for liturgical composition in the Roman Catholic communion for the at least the second half of the 20th century. All of the documents stemming from that Council have implications for the work of a Roman Catholic liturgical composer since they provide a vision of life for the community he or she serves. The most direct challenge, however, is provided by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, especially in its sixth chapter on sacred music. Article 121 provides the document's exhortation to composers:

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. The texts intended to be sung must always be consistent with Catholic teaching; indeed they should be drawn chiefly from holy Scripture and from liturgical sources.

I highlight six elements from this article that have had profound impact on liturgical music composition in the United States in the last three decades.

The exhortation first challenges the prevalent self-understanding of church composers. The document uses the term *musicarum artifices*, literally "artisans of music", to image composers as craftspeople who put their skills at the service of their communities. This conceptualization has much more in common with medieval notions of a composer anonymously contributing to the community's good, than with classical era ideas of a composer as an indentured servant of the aristocratic classes, or Romantic era notions of the composer as a solitary artist wrestling with the psyche and transforming that individual struggle into art for the enlightenment of the masses.

Second, the exhortation raises the question of the relationship between explicit faith commitment and the ability to write genuine liturgical music. Is it possible for one who does not worship regularly with a community, who belongs to another faith tradition, who is an agnostic or an atheist, to know how to mold a community's sung prayer? (In fact, a number of today's liturgical composers find their base in academia or with publishing houses rather than with particular worshipping communities. Some belong to other Christian denominations: Marty Haugen, for example, who is Lutheran by heritage and a member of the United Church of Christ for family reasons. Yet others have declared their disbelief in the Christian understanding of God [e.g., John Rutter] or are avowedly atheist [e.g., Ned Rorem]. Yet compositions by all of these composers and others who share their diverse faith-stances are employed in contemporary Catholic liturgical music programs without much critical reflection.) On the other hand, do Catholic communities of faith always welcome the possibly disturbing sounds created by their composer-members? We have yet to think through the complex question of commissioning, distributing and evaluating liturgical compositions intended for use in the Roman Rite in the United States.

Third, the exhortation specifies the nature of the vocation of liturgical composers in two ways: they are to "develop sacred music" (*ad musicam sacram colendam*) and they are to "increase its store of treasures" (*ad thesaurum eius augendum*). The Council Fathers recognized that composers, inspired by the liturgical texts and the ceremonies of Christian worship, have produced past masterpieces of universal human import: one need only think of the masses, requiems, anthems and motets of Guillaume de Machaut, Josquin Des Pres, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Franz Josef Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig von Beethoven, or Franz Schubert to see what impact Catholic Christian liturgical composition has had on the history of Western art music. Contemporary composers are bid to learn from the study of such masterpieces how to employ the musical language(s) of their own day in creating liturgical music of the highest excellence. But they are also directed to "develop" sacred music. The root meaning of the term *colendam* is "to cultivate" or "to till a field." The past musicolitical solutions to compositional issues (for example, treating the Sanctus-Benedictus as a multi-movement suite providing an aural background to the sotto voce recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer and framing its Institution Narrative) may not dictate how liturgical composition is to be done today. Changes in the agents, rites and texts of liturgical prayer produce changes in liturgical composition.

Fourth, article 121 challenged liturgical composers to "produce compositions have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music". This challenge provides the impetus for the vast amount of liturgical composition in the past three and a half decades. But I contend that the greatest difficulty facing present-day liturgical composition is a lack of consensus on what constitutes the "proper qualities" of Roman Rite liturgical music in the wake of Vatican II's liturgical reforms. Admittedly, article 112 declares that the purpose of sacred music (like the purpose of the liturgy itself) is "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful", and further specifies that sacred music 1) forms "a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy"; 2) provides a genuine "ministerial function" in the liturgy; 3) may "add delight to prayer"; 4) may "foster oneness of spirit"; and 5) may "invest the rites with greater solemnity". But I believe that the controversies we have experienced in the types, idiom, intent, and evaluation of liturgical compositions written in the past thirty-five years stem from varying understandings of how to apply these conciliar guidelines.

Fifth, article 121 requires liturgical composers to contend with a new element in producing their works: the "active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful" (*actuosa participationem totius coetus fidelium*). While the exhortation that composer write not only for large but for smaller choirs does not directly challenge the practice of writing art music for groupings of more or less trained musicians, the composer's craft is transformed by the call to provide scores for nonchoir members with little or no musical training or literacy. The composer must therefore write not only challenging and expressive music for the skilled, but *Gebrauchsmusik* for the ecclesial assembly.

Finally, the document notes that composers must make critical judgments about the texts they set. Rather than being expressions of vague religious sentiment, these texts must be doctrinally correct and drawn chiefly from scriptural and liturgical sources. Since most liturgical composers are not theologians, historians of worship, scripture scholars or lyricists, this challenge involves them in collaborative efforts to produce liturgical composition.

## 2. A Taxonomy of Compositional Strategies in Response to the Mandate: Traditionalist, Eclectic, Contemplative, Transformative

In the light of the compositional mandate offered in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, I would offer the following four-element taxonomy of compositional strategies. As in all taxonomies, one deals here with "ideal types" or "models" that serve to organize the data, but should not be taken as slots into which all composers and compositions must be pigeonholed.

The first strategy, based on official Roman Catholic liturgical music documents from Pius X's *Tra le sollecitudine* of 1903 through the 1967 implementation document from the Congregation for Divine Worship entitled *Musicam Sacram*, recognizes a transcultural "universal" liturgical music in Gregorian chant. The claim here is that, in conformity with the Council's demand that any new liturgical forms would grow "organically" from earlier forms, new compositions for the Roman Rite should arise organically from Gregorian chant which remains the proper music for that rite.

A consistent and intelligent spokesperson for this "traditionalist" approach in the United States is Msgr. Richard J. Schuler in editorials written for the journal

Sacred Music. Chant theorists such as Robert Skeris of Christendom College and ethnomusicologists such as Peter Jeffery caution against the wholesale abandonment of the chant and polyphonic heritage of Roman Catholic worship music. On an international level, this approach finds expression in the congresses and publications of the *Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae*.

Although very few composers known to me are producing vocal monody to traditional Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts for the Roman Rite (perhaps only Dom Jean Claire and his confreres at Solesmes in preparing chants for the new texts of the reformed Roman Rite liturgical books), some are attempting to create an English-language monody. Paul F. Page, for example, is busy creating a chant "Simple Gradual" in English, while Daniel Consiglio has been producing English monody as a member of a Camaldalese community in California. Other monastic composers have engaged similar projects, but their compositions are almost always confined to their own home communities or confederations and relatively rarely impact non-order parochial worship.

More widespread than the composition of monodic chants in the traditional languages or the vernacular is the use of chant elements as foundational or decorative in new compositions. A time-honored compositional strategy harkening back to the days of organum and cantus firmus, in the contemporary era this approach may involve inserting vernacular tropes into a chant line, alternating traditional chants (sung by choir or assembly, usually with instrumental accompaniment) with new vernacular embellishments (sung by cantor, choir or assembly), or appropriating chant themes for instrumental interludes in completely vernacular compositions. However, with the widespread abandonment of the chant heritage, there are few composers in the English-speaking world producing creative fusions of chant and contemporary composition as pioneered by French composers such as Maurice Durufle.

A second strategy, influenced by post-Vatican II ecumenical convergences, seeks inspiration from the variety of sung prayer forms generated by other Western Christian traditions: Reformation hymnody, African-American spirituals and gospel songs, harmonized chants (such as Anglican psalm-tones in four part harmony), charismatic songs. This strategy claims that since *Sacrosanctum Concilium* refused to prescribe one genre or style of liturgical music as normative, "oneness of spirit" can best be fostered by expressing the richness of diverse denominational responses to the gospel.

I suspect that this "eclectic" approach characterizes the majority of parish music programs in the United States today. It is fostered by the majority of the contributors to the journal *Pastoral Music*, the official publication of the United States-based National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Its strongest theoretical exposition appears in *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report* issued in 1992 by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee under the leadership of Archbishop Rembert Weakland. This approach finds international expression in the meetings and publications of *Universa Laus*.

The eclectic approach has been adopted by the majority of the Catholic church composers operating in the United States in the last three decades. In the area of hymnody, one thinks of Omer Westendorf's and Robert Kreutz' "Gift of Finest Wheat", Delores Dufner's "Sing A New Church into Being" (set to an American folk-hymn tune), or Marty Haugen's "Gather Us In" among a myriad of other examples. However it must be admitted that the United States has not produced a hymn-text writer in the Catholic communion of the stature of a Thomas Troeger, a Brian Wren, or a Timothy Dudley-Smith. (The closest may hail from the British Isles: James Quinn, SJ.) Following the lead of Clarence Joseph Rivers, a new generation of African-American composers are enriching American Catholic worship with their compositions in gospel idiom. Foremost among them would be Grayson Warren Brown, Rawn Harbor, and Leon Roberts; non-African Americans are also appropriating this idiom (e.g., David Haas in his 1990s compositions) and expanding it (e.g., Rob Glover's incorporation of jazz elements in his liturgical music). The redoubtable Howard Hughes has led the way in the creation of chant tones, both monodic and harmonized, both for the psalmody and canticles of the official English-language version of the Liturgy of the Hours and the new ICEL Psalter; Abbot Marcel Rooney, OSB, must also be mentioned in this context for the six volumes of his "Musical Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours" created on commission from the Visitation order in the United States and published by Conception (MO) Abbey (1978-1984). *Servant Music*, associated with the Catholic charismatic renewal in the United States, has produced many volumes in its *Songs of Praise*, but local initiatives like the National Evangelization Team based in St. Paul, MN, have also produced a repertoire of material strongly influenced by the praise choruses of Pentecostal worship.

A third strategy, inspired by the meditative practices of Eastern Christian traditions, use repetitive patterns and mantralike texts to provide a nondiscursive aural background to community prayer. Individual meditation done in common seems to be the goal of this style of liturgical music, which is an attempt to foster "oneness of spirit" without explicit reference to potentially divisive doctrinal issues.

I believe this "contemplative" approach is best represented by the music for worship generated for the ecumenical community at Taizé by the late Jacques Berthier. Since being introduced and promoted in the United States by GIA Publications, some United States composers (most notably in the recent work of Sr. Suzanne Toolen) have attempted to write in similar formats.

A fourth strategy, taking seriously the Council's recognition of liturgical music as "sacred song closely bound to the text", has provided "ritual/functional" music, frequently wedded to controversial new translations of scripture and liturgical texts with strong social-justice implications. The claim by this approach is that "oneness of spirit" is found in human communities counterculturally committed to resistance and liberation and that liturgical music must serve such an agenda if it is to be authentic.

In the United States an articulate spokesperson for this "transformative" compositional strategy is Tom Conry, though Miriam Therese Winter, Rory Coone, James Hansen and others have also espoused this stance. Internationally, the foremost representative might be Bernard Huijbers whose musical collaborations in creating a Dutch liturgical music repertoire and whose book *The Performing Audience* provides groundbreaking insights into this approach.

Unlike the first three strategies which look to past Christian musical practice (traditionalist = chant and chant-based polyphony of the Roman Rite; eclectic = the hymns and service music of other Western Christian denominations; contemplative = the music of Eastern Christian traditions) for guidance, the

"transformative" strategy looks to contemporary secular music practices for inspiration. It is usually explicitly informed by the theoretical concerns, from the human sciences (sociological analyses of music-making by particular groups, the social impact of music practices, the economics of music-distribution and reproduction; anthropological understandings of culturally coded "folk", "popular", and "art" musics; psychological explorations of the use of music to inculcate information, stifle reflection, or facilitate group action), the performing arts (theatrical theory applied to Christian liturgy), economic and political theory, as well as theology.

### 3. A Chronology of the Composer's Craft: 1965-1995

As I survey the past three decades of liturgical composition in the United States, I note three phases in response to the agenda set by Vatican II. In the first phase, the primary issue was producing a vernacular musical repertoire. In the second, the primary issue shifted to improving the quality and sources of the texts and music being produced. In the third phase, the primary issue seems to be clarifying the relationship of liturgical composition to the underlying ritual prayer structures. I will now explore each of these phases by describing characteristic engagements with rite, text, and music.

During the first phase the focus was on producing an English-language musical repertoire. Some composers treated the change in language and rite as purely cosmetic: the texts might be spoken or sung in the vernacular rather than Latin, a few ceremonies might have been pruned, but nothing "essential" in the rite was changed, and therefore nothing different in compositional craft was required. The liturgical composer taking this stance would continue to write a Gloria as part of a five-section "Mass suite". The opening phrase would continue to be intoned by the presider a cappella, and the rest of the text would be set as a series of solos, duets, quartets, and instrumental interludes alternating with choral writing. The only change from the "Glorias" produced in the Baroque, classical and romantic periods would be the vernacular texts and perhaps the musical idiom.

Other composers looked to the experience of other vernacular worship traditions to discover what they had to teach. Finding rich congregation participation through metrical hymnody among the Anglican/Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed churches, hymns began to be standard fare in the celebration of Catholic Eucharist. The so-called "hymn sandwich" of entrance, offertory, communion and exit was promoted as a means to achieve sung participation in the Mass, even though the spots chosen were hardly the ritual high points of the reformed eucharistic liturgy. Frequently these hymns were simply translations of European forebears, though some genuinely new English texts and tunes did appear.

Still other composers looked to contemporary social-political models for human engagement: hootenannies, happenings, political protest meetings. The concern here was to write instantly accessible assembly-based music, rich in shared feeling, popular and relevant to the issues of the day.

Choosing one's stance toward the compositional task also determined the texts one set. The first approach generated rather bald English translations of official Latin texts, intended to be sung to the traditional chants. While some success was achieved with syllabic Latin hymnody, the nematic and melismatic chants foundered on distorted accentual patterns and a changed ethos. The second approach produced more singable lyrics, given the propensity of sharply accented languages like English toward metrical singing. The texts, however, were rarely evocative or creative expressions of "the people's theology" (to use Eric Routley's telling phrase). More often they were thinly disguised Bible stories set to verse, catechetical indoctrinations, or rubrical directives (how else to judge a text such as "our priest is presiding / in Christ we are abiding"?). The third approach rediscovered a genuine stream of folk hymnody whose textual naivete might clothe profound theological insight, but more often simply produced vague paeans to peace, love, joy and "brother"hood.

Plainsong "proprs" and "ordinaries" appeared, most notably those created by Dennis Fitzpatrick for FEL, the "Friends of the English Liturgy?". Other composers created Masses in English with organ accompaniment, embellished with a few optional phrases tossed to the congregation. World Library of Sacred Music's *The People's Mass Book*, The Liturgical Press's *Our Parish Prays and Sings*, GIA Publications' *Hymnal of Christian Unity*, and FEL's *The English Liturgical Hymnal* all appeared during this period to graft a vigorous vernacular hymnody as an element in Roman Catholic worship. Culled from the prolific works of "liturgical troubadors", the *Hymnal for Young Christians* represents the compositional style of the third approach: "genera-pop" melodic lines with simple vocal harmonies, chord symbols rather than keyboard accompaniments. "Pioneers" in this style included: Willard Jabusch ("Whatsoever You Do"), Carey Landry ("Abba, Father"), Jack Miffleton, Tom Parker, Paul Quinlan, Cyril Reilly, Ray Repp ("What A Great Thing It Is"), Clarence Rivers ("God is Love"), Sebastian Temple ("Make Me A Channel of Your Peace"), James Thiem ("Sons of God"), Miriam Therese Winter ("Joy is Like the Rain"), and Joe Wise ("Gonna Sing My Lord"), among others. Groups such as the Dameans and the Montfort mission were likewise representative of this movement.

The second phase of North American composers' response to the challenge of Vatican II took as its primary concern the desire to improve the quality of both the texts and the music in liturgical composition. In 1972 the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy issued a landmark document entitled *Music in Catholic Worship* that moved beyond the prescriptions of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Musicam Sacram* to a new set of guidelines for the new cultural situation in which Roman Catholic liturgical music was being produced. By classifying the musical elements of eucharistic worship as acclamations, processional songs, responsorial psalms, ordinary chants, and supplementary songs, *Music in Catholic Worship* provided composers with a new "functional" understanding of each element of the rite.

Such clarifications soon led to a concern for higher quality in the texts being sung. Some composers consciously restricted themselves to setting only official texts, even when the English translations were less than felicitous (e.g., "terebinth" is not an easily sung word!). Other composers found or created idiomatic paraphrases of scriptural and liturgical texts more conducive, in their opinion, to sung community prayer.

Among classically-oriented composers, a search developed for a genuine "American" sound, somewhat similar to the search undertaken by art music composers such as Copland and Gershwin in the 1930s and 1940s. Richard Proulx pioneered a rediscovery of authentic American folk hymnody; Ed

Summerlin and Eddie Bonnemere looked to jazz. Perhaps the most influential (as well as most idiosyncratic) was C. Alexander Peloquin who embraced the idiom of the American musical theater in his liturgical composition (e.g., the "Gloria of the Bells", the use of cantor with microphone). The so-called folk-oriented composers continued to draw on African American and Appalachian traditions. Gregory Norbert of Weston Priory forged a lyric chant "endless melody" style. But it was the St. Louis Jesuits who took biblical paraphrase in American idioms most seriously and produced a body of work that began to crossfertilize with non-Roman Christian traditions in the United States: e.g., John Foley ("The Cry of the Poor"), Dan Schutte ("Here I Am, Lord"), Bob Dufford ("D major Holy, Holy and Amen"), Roc O'Connor ("Lift Up Your Hearts to the Lord, In Praise of His Mercy"), Tim Manion ("To You, Yahweh I lift up my soul, O my God").

The third phase, while building on the experiments and insights of the earlier phases, focuses on the creation of ritual music. If the interest in the earlier phases was to a great extent on writing individual songs, the challenge now was to write liturgical units, that is to say, to conceive how texts and gestures might interact with music in unified movements of ritual prayer. This concern has led to a critical reassessment of the rites as they are presently celebrated: their deep structures, their relation with the culture, their nonverbal constituents.

Composers today are less concerned with writing a "Gloria", for example, than with determining how the "Glory to God" functions as part of the introductory rites. They take into consideration how music can underscore the gathering of the assembly and prepare worshipers to celebrate the Word of God. This kind of composition demands collaboration with other experts in ritual prayer and attention to the reflective experience of worshipping communities.

This analysis of the rites leads to a parallel concern for the texts being set. How do words, phrases, sentences, interweave and overlap to communicate religious truth in the liturgical act? How does our deliberate or unconscious choice of verbal images for God and God's activity mold a community's faith-life? How do our verbal self-referents and declarations concerning the objects of our sacramental worship disclose our religious vision? Feminist and liberation critiques of our present rites and texts are especially trenchant, and liturgical composers must be informed on this debate and its implications for future worship.

The concern for these issues of ritual integrity has led composers to create in larger divisions of the rite, as well as to provide more flexible and alternative methods of realizing a score, based on varying resources in local communities. Perhaps the premiere example of such ritual composition is Marty Haugen's setting of Eucharistic Prayer III with Sunday Preface V in his Mass of Creation. Not only is this composition scored for brass/organ/timpani or guitar/woodwinds/piano sonorities, Marty has revisited the composition to provide further preface texts and to employ its acclamations in a Eucharistic Prayer for Children. Similar projects have appeared for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (David Haas), and the Liturgy of the Hours (Mike Joncas: Praise God in Song, O Joyful Light, God of Light be Praised, St. Francis Vespers). There is a crying need to develop further ritual music projects for the Triduum, funerals, and celebrations of Christian marriage.

#### 4. Present Concerns

As Catholic composers continue to respond to the mandate of the Second Vatican Council by producing increasingly sophisticated and practical ritual music further issues are challenging their craft. I will conclude this presentation by briefly considering five: textual, musical, leadership, technological, and mass marketing concerns.

##### 4.1. Textual

I would claim that the United States, Canada, and Australia have much to offer the world-wide Catholic communion in terms of multicultural and multilingual worship. While the papal liturgy from early days was marked by a bilingual character with the gospel being proclaimed in both Latin and Greek, the introduction of vernacular languages in Roman Rite worship has led to a recognition of the multilingual makeup of many communities in North America. The following strategies seem to have been adopted: some composers have enshrined English-language texts with melodic and accompaniment patterns associated with other cultures (e.g., Israeli folk-song melodies; bolero rhythms); others have set other vernacular languages to melodies and harmonies characteristic of English-language sacred music (e.g., strophic hymn-tunes; harmonized chant); still others have attempted to create bilingual compositions. The experiments of Bob Hurd, Dona Pena, and John Schiavone in creating English-Spanish liturgical music range from providing verses in both languages for alternation in performance, through creating refrains employing both languages in alternation, to constructing quodlibets where completely different melodies in different languages may be sung at the same time over the same harmonic figurations. Although criticized for their hybrid character, these compositions represent an American adaptation of the multilingual compositions used at Taize, though usually without an assembly refrain in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. At core the question these composers address is: "Whose vernacular shall be used in particular communities at prayer and why?" The situation will only grow more acute with the increase in the Catholic population of those employing various Asian and native American languages.

A issue facing contemporary composers is what register of language is appropriate for liturgical song. Once one ventures beyond the officially approved liturgical texts and direct biblical settings, one is confronted with a bewildering range of possible public prayer texts. Does one choose to set the finely honed phrases of a Richard Wilbur ("A Stable Lamp is Lighted") or are these texts considered too subtle for the sung worship of the masses? Does one employ the language of personal witness (as in much of the material produced for the "Lifeteen" program) even if its sentiments seem at variance with the traditional objectivity of the Roman Rite? Does one emulate the naivete of praise choruses, with their repetition of hallowed phrases from a neo-King James language register? Does one attempt to use "street language" in the hope of producing an immediate connection between worship and daily life, recognizing that such texts quickly become out-of-date with the constant evolution of colloquial language and slang? Deeply problematic is the programming of pieces for the liturgy originally intended by composer and lyricist for another venue, as when "show tunes" from Christian musicals such as the Song of Mark or Agape or

catechetical pieces such as "His Banner Over Me Is Love" appear at Lord's Day eucharist.

#### 4.2. Musical

Since Vatican II we have witnessed an extraordinary expansion of the instruments allowed in Catholic churches in the United States. Not only the sound of organ, supplemented by brass and timpani on festive occasions, but the timbres of pianos, guitars, string basses, woodwind and percussion obligati resound in our houses of worship. Perhaps even more significant is the use of electronic instruments as a normal method of accompanying congregational song, not only electronic organs, but synthesizers capable of sampling and emulating any orchestral instrument and a variety of sounds impossible to produce on purely acoustic instruments. Such an expanded tonal palette has led composers to create pieces whose instrumental elements are an integral part of the composition.

Unfortunately and probably unintentionally this compositional practice has obscured the primacy of the vocal in Roman Rite liturgical music. The impression is given that the liturgy is incapable of being sung without sophisticated musical accompaniment. One "solution" to such a perceived crisis is the creation of pre-recorded scores to be played over the church's sound system to which the assembly is invited to sing. Not only does this obscure the role of the music ministry (for example, no one has suggested that a "solution" to the frequently dismal public proclamation of the scriptures is to record actors reciting the pericopes for later playback during eucharist), but it reveals how the voice of the assembly has been downplayed in favor of polished instrumental performance.

While few North American composers are writing purely vocal music for the liturgy, the influence of Andre Gouzes (who has adapted the harmonized chants of Orthodox liturgical tradition to French vernacular texts) and the Scots Presbyterian minister John Bell (whose delight in unaccompanied singing is manifest in his compositions and the compilations of his Wild Goose Worship Group) will probably make itself felt in a North American context in the future.

Perhaps most painful is the apparent inability of the church to attract front-rank art music composers to create for the reformed liturgy. While one can point to Masses by Gian-Carlo Menotti and Leonard Bernstein (the latter much more a theater-piece than something able to be employed in Catholic worship) and Requiems by Andrew Lloyd-Webber and John Rutter, the masters of the contemporary concert hall seem by and large uninterested in liturgical composition. Perhaps they feel that their idiom is too advanced for the church's worship; perhaps they are unwilling to expend much energy in creating music which may become obsolete within a few decades due to new official translations of the liturgical texts; perhaps they feel that they are incapable of making genuine contributions to a tradition that seems to have reached its high point in the masterpieces of the classical era. Nonetheless it remains a painful truth that the best art music composers are conspicuously absent in contemporary liturgical repertoire. For that reason, it is all the more important to engage the work of so-called "holy minimalists" such as John Tavener and Arvo Pärt so its possible influence on future liturgical composition.

#### 4.3. Leadership

Liturgical music leadership has taken significantly different forms in United States parish life since Vatican Council II. Prior to the Council, liturgical music leadership would have been the responsibility of a volunteer choir director/organist, except for the cases of cathedrals or affluent parishes. Rather than providing musical enrichment for all worship events transpiring in parish life, this volunteer leader normally was responsible primarily for choosing the repertoire, rehearsing with and directing the parish choir for the Sunday "high Mass". Some also provided organ accompaniment for hymns sung during the "low Masses", accompanied soloists at weddings, and directed a schola or choir (frequently a children's group) for funerals. None were expected to provide music for the baptism of infants, reconciliation, or the anointing of the sick. The volunteer choir director/organist could be a layman (less frequently a laywoman), but presbyters (usually associate pastors with musical interests) or women religious (frequently the music teacher in the parish school or choir director for the parish convent) also took on this role. Volunteer choir directors/organists per se were not considered part of the parish staff and did not attend planning meetings (except for extraordinary or complicated events such as Confirmation). They may or may not have had formal musical training, but could read both chant and standard notation; they may or may not have had formal liturgical training, but could decipher the ordo to determine which chant and texts would be appropriate for a given celebration. Education for the role was usually a matter of apprenticeship rather than academic credentialing.

In the wake of Vatican Council II, many parishes developed a paid staff position of "Director of Music Ministries [hereafter DMM]. Unlike the earlier model of choir director/organist, the DMM was responsible for the musical elements of the life of the parish: not only in public liturgy and devotions, but also in evangelizing efforts, catechetical programs, fellowship experiences, and healing ministries. The DMM worked as a professional alongside other clergy and lay professionals. While the DMMs might serve in one of the particular liturgical music roles, their primary task was one of coordination: recruiting, forming, scheduling, enriching and assessing vocal (choir members, cantors) and instrumental (organist, guitarist, pianist, ensemble musician) liturgical musicians. A DMM was usually academically certified with at least a B.A. in music and/or liturgical studies.

From the mid-1980s on, however, probably as a result of shifting demographics and giving patterns, we have witnessed a downsizing of parish staffs; the multi-personed complex of specialists has given way to a reduced number of generalists. Frequently the DMM's role has been combined with that of parish liturgist, or even been subsumed into the responsibilities of "directors of adult formation" or "directors of parish worship and spirituality". The professional credentials, formation, method of working with clergy and other ministers, and reimbursement of liturgical music leaders are all topics under great debate at present.

Meanwhile some commentators have pointed to a gap in programs of liturgical music leadership aimed at youth. While the pre-Vatican II period could point to programs of informal apprenticeship based in the parish and the immediate post-Vatican II period developed academic credentialing in the development

of music ministers, there is a deep concern for whether and how young people are being attracted to and formed in music ministry today.

#### 4.4. Technology

A fourth area of concern lies in the technological developments that have marked church music in the United States in the last thirty years. First, one notes the change in acoustic environment for worship that has been wrought by the wholesale adoption of artificial amplification. On the one hand, such amplification can make preaching accessible to greater numbers of people and can allow solo voices to be balanced against choral and instrumental forces without strain or changes in tone color; on the other hand, such amplification can also lead to a false sense of intimacy and passive consumption rather than active production of worship music.

Second, cultural changes in our acoustic environment have implications for our worship music practices. One hundred and fifty years ago, if one wanted to experience music one either made it oneself or went to a place where others were making it. With the rise of recording technology, one could "re-play" an earlier musical event, but it still took place in an acoustic environment potentially shareable with others. With the rise of the Sony Walkman, individualized acoustic environments were created in which one can "consume" precisely the music of one's choice without sharing that music with others in immediate physical proximity. Such individual consumerism stands in marked contrast to the church's expectation that worshipers will not only produce musical events in real time (rather than as pre-recorded experiences), but that one's individual tastes may be downplayed for the sake of the common good.

Third, electronic sound generation and broadcast has become increasingly sophisticated. From the early days of the Theramin, we now have instruments capable of sampling, reproducing and combining musical events generated by acoustic instruments as well as constructing sounds incapable of production by acoustic instruments. This is changing our soundscape in radical ways, but it also raises questions of the cultural codes associated with electronic music making. Are the typical sounds produced by rock, rap, and hip-hop electronic instruments so connected to secular cultural codes that they will only be perceived as incongruous in public worship?

#### 4.5. Mass Marketing

Finally, there is a concern about the mass marketing techniques used at the end of the twentieth century for the dissemination of liturgical music. One must ask if the vast amount of new liturgical music being produced is market-driven rather than ministerial. In other words, is the impression given to worshipping assemblies that their music programs are "out of date" unless they are employing the newest material released by the major publishing houses? Does this produce a faddish and ephemeral repertoire rather than a stable and faith-grounding one? Are liturgical music composers being treated as entertainment "stars" rather than as servants of the sung prayer of communities? Comparing the liturgical music situation in countries with a national hymnal (such as Canada) in contrast to the United States (where repertoire is a matter of advertising and sales rather than a national standard) may offer insight into the strengths and weaknesses of mass marketing applied to liturgical music.

#### 5. Conclusion

This presentation concludes with a few sentences from the "Afterword" of *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report* (Washington, DC-Chicago, IL: The Pastoral Press-Liturgy Training Publications, 1992). Substantially the work of Don Saliers, a musician and theologian teaching at Emory University, these words evoke the power and promise of the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs marking Roman Catholic worship music in the United States since the Second Vatican Council:

[M]usic is a gift from God whereby we express and ponder the deepest aspects of life and death, of human aspiration, suffering and joy.... Music -- whose scope, complexity and power can sustain and reveal as can all art -- allows us to experience God in human form. In and through its worship, the Christian assembly challenges composers, musicians and all liturgical ministers to grow ever more deeply into the dispositions, capacities and musical forms that make Christian liturgy a vehicle of the transcendent and a supremely humanizing art. Together may we be prepared to receive "what eye has not yet seen, nor ear heard".

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1Annie Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982) 17-18.

2For the first three sections of this presentation I will be revisiting and updating material I have previously explored in "For the Glory of God and Our Holiness: Roman Catholic Liturgical Composition in the United States", *Liturgy* 9/1 (Fall 1990) 43-53.

3My understanding of the historian's task is heavily influenced by Bernard Lonergan's treatment of the topic in *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 175-234.