

Music in the liturgy workshop Thursday 25 May 2017

“Anō ko te Tinana o te Karaiti, arā, te Hahi ki Aotearoa me oke tātou kia taea te tino painga i ngā āhuatanga katoa o te tikanga karakia.”

“As the Body of Christ, the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand, let us strive together for excellence in all aspects of the liturgy.”

(He Puna Hīmene mō Aotearoa

Directory of Liturgical Music for Aotearoa New Zealand October 2015)

Music plays a central role in our Catholic worship. For us, liturgy and music go hand-in-hand. Beautiful, noble and simple music serves to enrich our liturgical celebrations and draws us ever more deeply into the Paschal Mystery, that is, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Directory 10)

“A liturgical service takes on a nobler aspect when the rites are celebrated with singing, the sacred ministers take their parts in them, and the faithful actively participate.”

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 113.

Criteria for selecting music

Musical Judgment

- Is the music technically, aesthetically and expressively good?
- Is there an identifiable musical structure and form?
- Do the melodies and harmony complement each other?
- Do the text and musical rhythm go together, or have they been forced?
- Are the phrases, intervals and harmonies singable?
- Is the music pleasing and engaging to the community?
- Does the music have the capacity to lift the assembly more fully into the mystery, or a more profound engagement in the mystery, indeed, to be symbolic, moving the listeners and singers beyond the human to the divine?
- Is the music able to express the text or the occasion for which it was composed?

Catholic Book of Worship III, 29

Liturgical Judgment

Not all liturgical music is of one style; some music may be described as classical, some as folk, some as contemporary.

Musicians need to consider the style of music that is best suited to the liturgical celebration, the particular assembly, and the instruments available.

It presumes an awareness of the musical priorities mentioned above.

The following questions will assist the musician in making a liturgical judgment regarding music for celebrations:

- Is the text theologically sound?
- Is the text consistent with the language of our contemporary liturgical books? For example, does the text use inclusive language in a manner consistent with our liturgical books?
- Will this music enable the assembly to participate fully in its praise of God?
- Is this piece of music in keeping with the norms for liturgical music found in the GIRM?
- Is this setting in accord with the text provided in the Roman Missal?
- Is this music suited to the assembly or to the choir only?

Catholic Book of Worship III, 30

Pastoral Judgment

The pastoral judgment is often best made in consultation with other music ministers and members of pastoral staff. This judgment is about the appropriateness of the music for a particular community on

a particular occasion. The following questions will assist the musician in making a pastoral judgment regarding music for celebrations.

- Will this piece of music help this assembly to express the prayer of the Church?
- Are the music and text in accord with the mentality, tastes and cultural expression of this assembly?
- Does the community know this piece of music?
- Will this piece be a valuable addition to the community's repertoire?
- Can this piece of music be used on more than one occasion during the liturgical year?
- Are the musicians and members of the community capable of performing this piece of music?

Catholic Book of Worship III, 31

Singing the liturgy and its rites is a normal dimension of every experience of communal worship. It is very important that the people sing because the action of singing the liturgy forms Christians. When they sing the liturgy, they express and deepen their faith (Peggy Lovrien *The Liturgical Music Answer Book* 1999 3).

Music enables us to express faith through song. We use the words and tunes of gifted composers to say what we often cannot ourselves put into words. The hymns that we sing speak of the wonders of God, of the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and of the power of the Holy Spirit among us.

Liturgy Brisbane <http://liturgybrisbane.net.au/liturgylines/hospitality-is-everyones-responsibility-why-do-we-sing-at-mass/>

“...to promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalms, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bearing”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy December 1963 #30).

[Singing in their own language] would activate a deeper conversion in the hearts of all people ... leading Catholics to accept the mission of Christ [and] move into the world to transform the world (building the kingdom of God) (Lovrien 6).

We must be sensitive to the theology expressed in the text ... We need to discern the way Scripture was interpreted by the composer because Catholics are not fundamentalists. The music we sing primarily expresses our communal faith in the paschal mystery. As a result, a devout solo with “Jesus and me” spirituality may not have a place within a community of believers working to sing in unity in order to express their common faith in the Trinity (Lovrien 79).

Which music will urge members of our community of faith to go into ordinary life and transform it into a community of justice and hope and love which cannot turn away from people who suffer for lack of food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and education? Working for the common good of all people means that family habits change, that work environments change, that the economy changes, that the priorities on national and international spending changes, that relationships between nations change – that the world changes. And it can begin in the liturgy we sing (Lovrien 136).

The purpose of music in the liturgy is to move us to conversion, to change our hearts and move us to true discipleship that centers on building the City of God. ... Only when we surrender to the vision of what God is calling each of us to in our service as ministers of music can we truly become a living song of praise, free to celebrate the wonder of God. Then we can sing. Then we can feast at the table with our brothers and sisters honestly and in harmony with our gospel call. Then we can praise with total abandon. And then our vocation will have integrity.

David Haas *Music and the Mass: A practical guide for ministers of music*. 1998. P. 123.