



The Forum Romanum, or Campo Vaccino, with the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina in the foreground left, and the Temple of Castor and Pollux right. 100, II

A CHRONICLE OF THE REFORM

PART V: *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations*

The enormous task of implementing in the practical order the wishes of the council fathers as expressed in the constitution on the sacred liturgy occupied the attention of the Roman authorities for nearly ten years. Two official bodies were involved in the process, the Consilium for Implementing the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Difficulties between the two groups were many, but they were eventually solved by the establishment of the Sacred Congregation of Divine Worship to replace the old Congregation of Rites and the reorganization of the Consilium as a special commission dedicated to completing the liturgical reform.¹ Many conflicts of personalities and problems between the liturgists and the musicians continued to trouble the work of implementing the reforms called for by the council.

For church musicians the most important events of the decade following the close of the council were the publication of the new liturgical books as well as the various instructions and decrees of the Consilium and the Congregation of Rites and later, the new Congregation of Divine Worship. Fundamental to the entire reform was the new order of the Mass which was finalized with the appearance of the *Missale Romanum* in 1969. Controversy over the introduction to the 1969 edition led to the issuing of another "Institutio generalis Missalis Romani" in 1970. The Latin text of the missal remains the basis for all vernacular sacramentaries that have been published throughout the world.²

The new order of the Mass brought new texts for which musical settings were wanting, particularly the responsorial psalms. The rearrangement of introits and communions, different from the old order, as well as the three-year cycle of scripture readings, presented some difficulties at first. The new calendar impinged more closely on the church musician, because of the suppression of some feasts and a revised positioning of others. A new system of classification of liturgical celebrations according to importance brought a new vocabulary with "memorials," "solemnities," "ordinary time," etc. The old octaves were gone for the most part, and the familiar sequences were no longer obligatory.

Publication of a new *Graduale Romanum* followed shortly. Based on scholarly research and sound methodology, the chants for the Mass were made available in an edition prepared by the monks of Solesmes.³ According to the principles enunciated in the preface to the volume, only authentic chants were included, eliminating many pieces that had cluttered the earlier 1908 edition. New feasts introduced into the calendar with texts lacking in authentic chant settings would have to be provided with music written in the idiom of our day, since Gregorian chant is no longer the style of contemporary

composition and the process of producing an *ersatz* chant has been discredited. Music for newly introduced responsorial psalms would have to be newly composed. The challenge of the council fathers to musicians was seen to be an on-going one.

The new missal contains eighty-seven different preface texts. To provide musical settings for use at the altar, the monks of Solesmes edited a volume called *Ordo Missae in cantu*. Settings for the prefaces in both solemn and simple tones, as well as musical notation for the singing of the four Eucharistic prayers, and the various introductory rites made up this most useful volume.⁴ Together with the *Graduale Romanum* and the *Missale Romanum*, the *Ordo Missae in cantu* provided the clergy and the musicians with all the books needed to celebrate the sung liturgy in Latin.

An effort to introduce a simpler chant for the Mass produced a *Graduale simplex*, which was a failure from the beginning. It neither pleased the progressive liturgists who wanted only the vernacular, nor the musicians who pointed out that it was a mutilation of Gregorian chant as well as a misunderstanding of the relationship between text and musical setting with reference to form. They objected to the use of antiphon melodies from the office as settings for texts of the Mass. An effort at an English vernacular version proved to be even a greater disaster.

The revision of the office and the ritual had less impact on the ordinary church musician, although it caused grave changes in monastic communities.⁵ No new official books in Latin with musical notation have been forthcoming as yet for the universal Church for the singing of the hours, although attempts to set the vernacular texts can be found. The official *Liturgia horarum* has no musical settings.

While the Holy See published the official revised liturgical books in the Latin language and spread them around the world, in the United States these books remained almost totally unknown, and in fact, in some dioceses, their use was prohibited by local legislation that forbade the use of Latin.⁶ To a great degree, the American clergy still do not know the *Missale Romanum*, the new *Graduale Romanum* or the *Ordo Missae in cantu*. They continue to co-relate the use of Latin with the old rite and the vernacular with the reformed rite. When asked to sing a Mass in Latin, they frequently resort to the old editions which are no longer in use. The confusion spread in the sixties concerning the use of Latin still continues.

Thus, with the virtual demise of Latin and with it the repertory of Gregorian chant and polyphonic music, church musicians turned their efforts to music for the new vernacular liturgy. Among the early problems was the instability of the translations, which were changed a number of times during the period of experimentation which produced many temporary versions. Choirs were discouraged by the assertion that there was no longer a place for them, and they regretted the loss of familiar repertory. New music was not quickly forthcoming, although publishers rushed to sell compositions, many the work of total amateurs. It soon became apparent that the congregations that were expected to sing psalms and responsories and lengthy antiphons and parts of the Mass, were only capable of mastering a few hymns and not much more. The vernacular liturgy did not generate a "nest of singing birds" in the United States, and with choirs disorganized, the combo of a few instruments with various types of so-called folk-music became the musical ensemble in many churches. The organ was replaced by the guitar, the choir by the vocal combo, the professional musician by the amateur, the sacred by the secular. The hoped-for flowering of the privilege of the vernacular did not mature. Rather the speed of the disintegration of all that had been worked for during the years since Pius X amazed serious musicians. The decay was incredible.

In asking the question why, musically speaking, the reforms of the council were not a success, one must always arrive at the same answer: the wishes of the council fathers were not carried out. The council documents are clear; the instructions that followed are

detailed and understandable; the official liturgical books leave no doubt about their use. But why have they not been put into effect in the United States? An important reason lies in the issuing of a document by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, prepared by the Music Advisory Board and entitled "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations."⁷ While claiming to be an American interpretation of the Roman instruction, *Musicae sacram*, this statement is based on principles quite contrary to the expression of liturgical theology continuing through the past one hundred years. It is confused and even erroneous in doctrinal, musical and legal aspects. One wonders why the Roman instruction was not allowed to stand on its own and why an American statement was necessary at all, unless perhaps to prevent the Roman directions from becoming known and implemented in the United States.

Three years before the appearance of "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations," Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical on the Holy Eucharist, *Mysterium Fidei*, September 3, 1965. Strangely, the American document has no reference to the encyclical even though its chief concern is with the Mass. In fact, it contains several statements quite contrary to the clear teaching of the encyclical. Pope Paul wrote in *Mysterium Fidei*:

Having safeguarded the integrity of the faith, it is necessary to safeguard also its proper mode of expression, lest by the careless use of words, we occasion (God forbid) the rise of false opinions regarding faith in the most sublime of mysteries. St. Augustine gives a stern warning about this in his consideration of the way of speaking employed by the philosophers and of that which must be used by Christians. "The philosophers," he says, "who use words loosely and in matters very difficult to understand have no great fear of offending a religious audience. We religious, however, have the obligation of speaking according to a definite norm lest the license of our words give rise to an impious opinion about the matters which are signified by these words.

The norm, therefore, of speaking which the Church after centuries of toil and under the protection of the Holy Spirit has established and confirmed by the authority of councils, and which has become more than once the watchword and standard of correct belief is to be religiously preserved and let no one at his own good pleasure or under the pretext of new science presume to change it ... We are not to tolerate anyone who on his own authority wishes to modify the formulae in which the Council of Trent sets forth the mystery of the Eucharist for our belief.⁸

In the light of the words of Pope Paul, the statement of the Music Advisory Board seems to be wanting in clarity and even to be expressing false opinions. One might wonder why an advisory board in the area of music should put out a theological statement at all, and especially this paragraph:

The eucharistic prayer is the praise and thanksgiving pronounced over the bread and wine which are to be shared in the communion meal. It is an acknowledgment of the Church's faith and discipleship transforming the gifts to be eaten into the Body which Jesus gave and the Blood which he poured out for the life of the world, so that the sharing of the meal commits the Christian to sharing in the mission of Jesus. As a statement of the universal Church's faith, it is proclaimed by the president alone. As a statement of the faith of the local assembly it is affirmed and ratified by all those present through acclamations like the great Amen.⁹

The authors of "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations" use the word "transform" to describe the effect of the words of consecration and avoid the word "transubstantiation" as commanded by Pope Paul. They employ the term "meal" twice in a short paragraph, and the term "sacrifice" is not found once in the entire document of over six pages, while in *Mysterium Fidei* Pope Paul uses it repeatedly and has occasion only once to employ the word "meal." The term "president" is used instead of "priest."

The document clearly was intended to be an expression of theological ideas quite different from those taught by Pope Paul, including such questions as the purpose of prayer, the distinction between the hierarchical priesthood and the common universal priesthood, the nature of Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist and His presence among us, and the very purpose of the Mass itself. In a variety of issues, the document of the Music Advisory Board offends against the clear teaching of the encyclical. What is obvious from such a comparison is that the theological convictions of the progressive liturgists and the thinking of the *Universa Laus* group are closely associated with doctrinal deviations that the council fathers voted to reject but which surfaced after the council not only in theological writings but in such practical applications as these published for musicians.

But "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations" is not confused only in doctrinal matters. It fails in musical questions to conform to directives from the Holy See. *Musicam sacram* says: "The distinction between solemn, sung and read Mass, sanctioned by the instruction of 1958, is to be retained."¹⁰ But the Music Advisory Board says: "While it is possible to make technical distinctions in the forms of Mass ... there is little distinction to be made between the solemn, sung and recited Mass."¹¹ *Musicam sacram* uses the long-standing terminology of "ordinary" and "proper" parts of the Mass; but the Music Advisory Board says that "the customary distinction between the ordinary and proper parts of the Mass with regard to musical settings and distribution of roles is irrelevant."¹² The Music Advisory Board says that "the musical settings of the past are usually not helpful models for composing truly contemporary pieces."¹³ But *Musicam sacram* says:

Musicians will enter on this new work with the desire to continue that tradition which has given the Church a truly abundant heritage. Let them examine the works of the past, their style and characteristics, but let them also pay careful attention to the new laws and requirements of the liturgy, so that new forms may in some way grow organically from forms that already exist.¹⁴

The chief error to be found in the American document, however, is concerned with the very purpose of sacred music, and this error lies at the root of most of the problems that have arisen since the issuing of the unfortunate statement. The constitution on the sacred liturgy repeats the centuries-old position of the Church: "The purpose of sacred music is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful."¹⁵ But the Music Advisory Board says:

Music, more than any other resource, makes a celebration of the liturgy an attractive human experience. Music in worship is a function sign. It has a ministerial role. It must always serve the expression of faith. It affords a quality of joy and enthusiasm to the community's statement of faith that cannot be gained in any other way. In so doing, it imparts a sense of unity to the congregation.¹⁶

With the purpose of sacred music reduced to the "creating of a truly human experience," one can easily explain the secularization of wedding music, the introduction of various combos, show-tunes, folk-music, ballads and much of the newly composed religious pieces that lack all artistic merit. The criterion has become "We like it." The requirements of sanctity and good art have been replaced. Music is no longer *pars integrans*, as the council fathers called it, but it has become entertainment at worship.

The Music Advisory Board's document teaches that there are now four principal classes of texts: readings, acclamations, psalms and hymns, and prayers. This comes directly from *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship* by Father Joseph Gelineau.¹⁷

Because these theories were imposed on the church musicians of the United States, the various instructions of the Holy See failed to get a hearing. The liturgists refused to

accept the sixth chapter of the constitution on the sacred liturgy as well as the instruction, *Musicam sacram*, and in their place they promoted the tenants of *Universa Laus* as expressed in "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations."

One may ask how such a body as the Music Advisory Board could impose its opinions on the musicians and clergy of the United States. What was their legal foundation? The constitution on the sacred liturgy says: "It is desirable that the competent ecclesiastical authority, mentioned in article 22, set up a liturgical commission, to be assisted by experts in liturgical sciences, sacred music, art and pastoral practice."¹⁸ Advisory boards were set up in other areas besides music. Their capacity was seen as exclusively advisory to the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

The Bishops' Committee finds its purpose and description in a document from the Holy See, an instruction for the proper implementation of the constitution on the sacred liturgy, dated September 26, 1964:

The territorial authority may, as circumstances suggest, entrust the following to this commission:

- a) studies and experiments to be promoted in accordance with the norm of article 40, 1 and 2 of the constitution;
- b) practical initiatives to be undertaken for the entire territory, by which the liturgy and the application of the constitution on the liturgy may be encouraged;
- c) studies and the preparation of aids which become necessary in virtue of the decrees of the plenary body of bishops;
- d) the office of regulating the pastoral-liturgical action in the entire nation, supervising the application of the decrees of the plenary body, and reporting concerning all these matters to the body;
- e) consultations to be undertaken frequently and common initiatives to be promoted with associations in the same region which are concerned with scripture, catechetics, pastoral care, music and sacred art, and with every kind of religious association of the laity.¹⁹

The question arises concerning the fact of how many of these functions have been entrusted to the committee by the territorial authority. But presuming that all of them have been so entrusted, it still remains a fact that in each of the cases enumerated in the instruction from the Holy See, the committee is concerned only with studies and experiments, with regulating what the plenary body has already decreed, with preparation of aids and consulting learned societies and individuals, and with practical initiatives to promote the constitution on the sacred liturgy. Committees are normally set up by a plenary body and are responsible to that body that has created them; they report their findings to that body which then, having received or not received the report, may or may not determine to take action on the subject in question. Thus the "legislative" authority in liturgy in this country as a whole remains the "territorial authority," the plenary body of bishops, subject always to the Holy See.²⁰

An interesting note appeared in the *Newsletter of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy* when "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations" was issued:

The following statement was drawn up after study by the Music Advisory Board and was submitted to the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. The Bishops' Committee has approved the statement, adopted it as its own, and recommends it for consideration by all. ²¹

The question is obviously just what authoritative value does this document possess, and therefore, what respect and even obedience does it demand. Can it be construed as the basis for local diocesan legislation on musical matters, as has in fact so often been done?

The answer must be that it has no legal binding force, since it is merely the opinion of a

board that is only advisory to a committee that in itself has no legislative authority but is constituted to report to the full body that impowered it, an act that doubtfully was ever done at all. In addition, when the opinions of an advisory board are found to be in contradiction to authoritative Roman instructions, then they clearly must be rejected.²² But, in fact, they were not, and "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations" became the basis for great activity in most dioceses where many musicians in good faith accepted the propaganda delivered to them by *Universa Laus*, acting through the Music Advisory Board.

Two national meetings were arranged in order to launch "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations," one in Kansas City, Missouri, December 1 and 2, 1966, when the Music Advisory Board met, reorganized itself to be free of members who would likely oppose the projected statement, and then appointed a committee to write the desired document. Members of the committee were Fathers Eugene Walsh, S.S., and Robert Leodogar, M.M., and Dennis Fitzpatrick. The other major meeting was in Chicago, Illinois, November 20 to 23, 1968, jointly attended by members of diocesan music and liturgy commissions from across the nation. Under the watchful eye of Father Frederick McManus, papers were given by Rev. Joseph M. Champlin, Rev. Robert Leodogar, M.M., Rev. Eugene Walsh, S.S., Rev. Neil McEleney, C.S.P., Bishop John J. Dougherty, Rev. Gary Tollner and Rev. William A. Bauman. Statements made and left unchallenged included these: "Without faith, there can be no sacrament; community faith is necessary; it exists in the community before it exists in the individual." "The faith of those present accomplishes the marvelous change called transubstantiation." "The primary sign of the Eucharist are (*sic*) people gathering together, not the bread and wine or words."

With only a few objections, which were quickly disposed of, the document, "The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations," was considered approved, although it had scarcely been considered by the assembly and little or no discussion was permitted or encouraged. But the true colors of those who were manipulating the reforms of music and liturgy in the United States became crystal clear in Chicago. The practical application of the principles set forth in the document was presented at the Mass celebrated by Rev. J. Paul Byron at Old Saint Mary's Church, November 21, at which the folk-music of Phil Ochs and Pete Seeger was performed.²³ Present at most of the sessions and the Masses were many members of the hierarchy, members of the bishops' committee on liturgy, none of whom raised any objections to the statements made or the music performed.²⁴

With the document now enjoying an "official" position, taken by some to be even legislative and authoritative and equal if not surpassing Roman legislation, the disintegration of church music across the country began in earnest. "Beat" music, so-called folk-music, combos, jazz and rock groups, country Western and ballads became the accepted music for parish liturgies, weddings, graduations and even ordinations. The Catholic and the secular press have recorded the aberrations.²⁵ With the introduction of profane and trivial compositions and performances, good music became ever more disused, as choirs were disbanded and even prohibited. Seminaries, novitiates and colleges led the way, and little official effort was expanded to curtail it.²⁶ In some dioceses the bishops did speak up forcefully against abuses.²⁷ Writers in Catholic periodicals generally backed the revolution, but others expressed caution and concern.²⁸ As music for "special groups," originally intended for college and high school students, came to mean music for elementary pupils too, so that they could participate more fully, some liturgists promoted the writing of music by grade school children for performance at their Masses. *Living Worship*, a publication of the Liturgical Conference, assured church musicians that the piano had at least four advantages over the organ as a liturgical instrument, and that ukeleles are amazingly simple for young children to learn

to play.²⁹ In a more learned idiom, *Worship* published an explanation of the entire reform: "The hootenanny Mass can give explicit eucharistic and christological specification to youth's intense involvement in the movements for racial justice, for control of nuclear weapons, for the recognition of personal dignity."³⁰

With the very purpose of sacred music undermined, the repertory of centuries set aside, the language of the Church even outlawed, choirs disbanded and a rash of secular compositions and ensembles put in the place of a thousand-year tradition, there is little wonder that church musicians were baffled and disheartened. The hope and development promised by the council fathers had not materialized in this country, chiefly because what came from Rome never reached the United States.

MONSIGNOR RICHARD J. SCHULER

NOTES

1. Cf. *Notitiae*, 195-196 (October-November 1982), p. 466.
2. This writer once was asked by a priest if the Latin *Missale Romanum* that he was unfamiliar with was a translation into Latin from the English missal! It demonstrates how the Latin missal was kept from the American priests.
3. See *Sacred Music*, Vol. 102, No. 4 (Winter 1975), p. 31-35; Vol. 103, No. 3 (Fall 1976), p. 3-6.
4. See *Sacred Music*, Vol. 103, No. 4 (Winter 1976), p. 19-28; Vol. 104, No. 1 (Spring 1977), p. 21-25.
5. In 1966, Pope Paul VI warned religious communities bound to the singing of the office that, "if this language, noble, universal and admirable for its spiritual vigor, if the Gregorian chant that comes from the depths of the human soul — if these two things be remodeled, then the choir will become like an extinguished candle which no longer illuminates or attracts the attention of the minds of men. The Church introduced the vernacular among the faithful for pastoral reasons; but she looks to you to preserve the ancient beauty, gravity and dignity of the divine office in both language and chant." Quoted in *The Wanderer*, Oct. 6, 1966.
6. For a partial list of dioceses in the United States with regulations against the use of Latin, see Johannes Overath, ed. *Sacred Music and Liturgy Reform after Vatican II*, Rome 1969, p. 22-23.
7. *Newsletter of Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy*, Vol. 4, No. 1-2 (January-February 1968).
8. Paragraph 23, 24.
9. IV, B, 1, a.
10. Paragraph 28.
11. II, B, 1.
12. II, B, 3.
13. II, B, 3.
14. Paragraph 59.
15. Article 112.
16. III; III, B.
17. Joseph Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1964.
18. Article 44.
19. Paragraph 45.
20. Cf. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (June 28, 1968). No bishops' conference can delegate any of its legislative authority to any of its committees.
21. Vol. 104, No. 1-2 (January—February 1968).
22. See Richard J. Schuler, "By Whose Authority?" *The Wanderer*, April 4, 1968, p. 3.
23. The official program of the meeting prints the texts for *Oh, Had I a Golden Thread* by Pete Seeger; *When I've Gone* by Phil Ochs; and *This Little Light of Mine*.
24. Members of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy were Most Rev. Leo C. Byrne, Coadjutor Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, Most Rev. John L. Morkovsky, Most Rev. James W. Malone, Most Rev. Francis J. Furey, Most Rev. Aloysius J. Wycislo and Most Rev. John J. Dougherty.
25. Some of the "top ten" of the liturgical hits in the late sixties were: *Michael, Row the Boat; Blowing in the Wind; Gypsy Rover; and Kum-bay-a*. Often these had newly composed words whose literary worth was worse than liturgical value of the melodies. Others were totally secular in both words and music, e.g., *Hush Little Baby; There is a Ship; Try to Remember; This Land is Your Land*, etc.
26. For example, in a letter to this writer, dated March 31, 1966, Archbishop Hallinan of Atlanta, Georgia, said: "I am sympathetic to the adaptation of popular music in church to include the use of folk songs. I would not want the bishops' commission to take a strong stand against such folk music. Rather, I prefer the free development of it, with of course, proper care and exercise of caution at all times."
27. For example, Archbishop Cousins in Milwaukee and Bishop Gorman in Dallas both spoke out against the abuses.
28. Cf. Michael D. Cordovana, "Perspective of Change," *Musart*, September-October 1967, p. 10-11, 41; Robert F. Hayburn, "Music for Special Groups," *Musart*, September-October 1967, p. 16, 33-38.
29. William Flanders, "Music for Children's Liturgies — Practical Excerpts from a New Book," *Living Worship*, Vol. 6, No. 7, September 1970.
30. Patrick Regan, "The Change Behind the Changes," *Worship*, Vol 40, No. 1, January 1966.