

Participatio actuosa in theological and musical perspective. Documentary considerations

By Monsignor Robert A. Skeris • Originally published in German (Bonn, 1973)

The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ the High Priest on Calvary is and will remain the basis for the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy. Membership of the Church, which is brought about by valid baptism, makes one a part of the Mystical Body of Christ the Priest, to whose priesthood one is interiorly conformed¹ through the baptismal character.

In comparison with the high priesthood of Christ Himself, this priesthood of the baptised is analogous, by an analogy of proper proportionality.² And since confirmation is related to baptism as growth is related to birth, it is clear that the so-called universal priesthood of all believers is ontologically based upon baptism, and not upon the sacrament of confirmation.³ As St. Jerome aptly phrased it, “Sacerdotium laici, id est baptisma.”⁴

From these facts the Church has always drawn the necessary consequences both in theory and in practise. Thus, for example, though there were certain variations in the different liturgical and geographical areas, the basic ways of expressing the participation of the laity in the Eucharist remained in principle the same from the third to the sixth century.⁵ Furthermore, in wide areas of the Frankish kingdom during the sixth and seventh centuries the faithful participated in the liturgical actions and chants.⁶ And from the era of the great Spanish councils of Toledo there are many examples of the participation of the people in their liturgy.⁷ It should be obvious that the Ordinary of the Mass offered opportunities for popular participation.⁸

1 Cujus sacerdotio configurantur fideles: Sum. Theol. III q. 63a. 3 resp.

2 See A. GRAIFF, Teologia della partecipazione dei fedeli alla liturgia: La partecipazione dei fedeli alla messa = Liturgica 3 (Roma 1963) 29/62, here above all 43/4. On analogy, see E. CORETH, Analogia entis: LThK I (1957²) 468/70.

3 Ita se habet confirmatio ad baptismum, sicut augmentum ad generationem: Sum. Theol. III q. 72a. 6 resp. On this see also GRAIFF (note 2) 45/50. In order to base the doctrine of the universal priesthood in the Church at least in part upon the sacrament of Confirmation, Pius PARSCH, for example, interpreted the sacred chrism as “oil of anointing to the priestly dignity”: Bericht über die 2. Volksliturgische Tagung in Klosterneuburg: Bibel und Liturgie 2 (1927/28) 428/50, here 443/7. More recently, another attempt to stress the importance of the sacrament of Confirmation in this respect has been made by B. LUYKX, Théologie et pastorale de la confirmation: Paroisse et Liturgie 39 (1957) 180/201, 263/78, here e. g. 264, 267. But on the other hand B. BOTTE has pointed out how difficult it would be to find this beautiful idea (une très belle idée) in the Church Fathers (on ne la trouve pas chez les Pères): BTAM No. 669 (1951) Tome 6/202. See also the apposite remarks of E. SCHILLENBEECKX, Le Christ, Sacrement de la rencontre de Dieu (tr. A. KERKVOORDE) = Lex Orandi 31 (Paris 1964) 176/88, above all 181/2. However, it cannot be denied that the character of confirmation also includes a deputatio ad cultum and is related to the baptismal character. See the overview of the sources presented by A. ROBEYNS, Les droits des baptisés dans l’assemblée liturgique: LMD 61 (1960) 97/130, here 99/107.

4 Dialogus contra Luciferianos: MPL 23/166.

5 J.-P. MONTMINY, La participation des laïcs à l’Eucharistie du II^e au VI^e siècle: Sciences ecclesiastiques 19 (1967) 351/72, here 369.

6 G. NICKL, Der Anteil des Volkes an der Meßliturgie im Frankenreiche von Chlodwig bis auf Karl den Großen: Forschungen zur Geschichte des innerkirchlichen Lebens 2 (Innsbruck 1930) 24/32 on the Sanctus and the Pater Noster, 36/61 on the presentation of the gifts and the kiss of peace, etc.

7 A. FRANQUESA, Die Beteiligung des Volkes in der mozarabischen Liturgie: LL 5 (1938) 243/72, here above all 259/65.

8 See for example the indications given by B. CAPELLE, Compte rendus bibliographiques: l’histoire des rites et la participation active à la Messe: QLP 18 (1933) 169/82.

On the theoretical level, F. HOLBÖCK has clearly shown that although the theological foundations of active participation in the liturgy were perceived with increasing clarity during the course of the passing centuries, they were never ignored completely, not even in the period between Berengar and the Fourth Lateran Council.⁹

More recent times have witnessed a noteworthy growth of interest in the question of “active participation,” especially since the publication of the *Motu proprio Tra le sollecitudini* of St. Pius X.¹⁰ This document forms the basis of all subsequent papal statements on the subject,¹¹ many of which found a sympathetic resonance in the German language area, above all in student circles and among college graduates, where the German “Quickborn House” at Castle Rothenfels on the Main exercised an important influence.¹² In these groups, external participation was very strongly emphasised, indeed it was taken for granted that everyone would recite the prayers and sing the chants together.

The names of R. GUARDINI, S. LANDERSDORFER, J. A. JUNGSMANN and H. v. MEURERS perhaps typify developments within Germany during the period between the World Wars.¹³ The initiatives developed in centres like Klosterneuburg, Paris, Antwerp and Maria Laach as well as the international meetings at St. Odilienberg, Lugano or Assisi, for instance, determined to a large extent, through the cooperation of the centres for pastoral liturgy, the entire atmosphere in the years just prior to the last Council.¹⁴ And thus when the Council was announced, personalities from these centres were at hand to carry out no small part of the preparatory labours.¹⁵ And finally the first fruits of Vatican Two were solemnly proclaimed on 4 December 1963: the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*.”¹⁶

- 9 F. HOLBÖCK, *Der eucharistische und der mystische Leib Christi in ihren Beziehungen zueinander nach der Lehre der Frühscholastik* (Rom 1941) 215/8, 229/31. See also A. KOLPING, *Der aktive Anteil der Gläubigen an der Darbringung des eucharistischen Opfers. Dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung frühmittelalterlicher Meßerklärungen: Divus Thomas* 27 (1949) 369/80; 28 (1950) 79/110, above all 166/7.
- 10 AAS 36 (1903/4) 329/39. See also G. LERCARO, *Tätige Teilnahme, das Grundprinzip des pastoralliturgischen Reformwerkes Pius X.: LjB* 3 (1953) 167/74, here 174. Publications on this subject have meanwhile increased to such an extent that it is quite superfluous to attempt even an overview at this point.
- 11 Cf. the collection of these statements by e. g. P. THEEUWS, *Actieve deelname der gelovigen aan de liturgie: Tijdschrift voor Liturgie* 46 (1962) 303/13; also A. MISTRORIGO, *La partecipazione del fedeli alla liturgia nel pensiero e nell'opera dei Sommi Pontefici: La partecipazione dei fedeli alla Messe = Liturgica* 3 (Roma 1963) 11/27. To be consulted with care and a critical sense is the *Diss. theol. of Stephan SCHMID-KEISER, Aktive Teilnahme. Kriterium gottesdienstlichen Handelns und Feierns = Europäische Hochschulschriften XXIII/250* (Bern 1985) 1/10–125.
- 12 On this see E. J. LENGELING, *Ernte der liturgischen Bewegung: Idem, Die Konstitution = Reihe Lebendiger Gottesdienst* 5/6 (Münster 1964) 38*/46*, here above all 39*/41*.
- 13 See J. WAGNER, *Heinrich von Meurers zum Gedächtnis: LjB* 3 (1953) 5/9.
- 14 On this see e. g. A. ROBEYNS, *De actieve deelneming aan de Eucharistie en het pontificaat van Pius XII: Tijdschrift voor Liturgie* 41 (1957) 50/61, here 50/3.
- 15 On this see LENGELING, *Die Konstitution* (note 12) 41/3, 49. Furthermore DOL 77/86 and cf. 20/76, above all 78; A. BUGNINI, *La riforma liturgica (1948/1975) = EphLit Subsidia* 30 (Roma 1983) 902/20.
- 16 AAS 56 (1964) 97/138.

I.

Within that section of the preliminary conciliar draft which enunciated the basic theological principles, the subject of *actuosa participatio* was treated chiefly in paragraphs 9 and 14 within the framework of earlier magisterial pronouncements such as *Divini cultus*, *Mediator Dei*, the allocution of Pius XII for Assisi, *Tra le sollecitudini* and the *Instructio* of 1958.¹⁷ In his explanatory *relatio* presented during the fourth general session on 22 October 1962, Franciscan Fr. Ferdinand ANTONELLI spoke of a “*participatio actuosa et personalis*.” Some of the observations made in the ensuing discussion are of interest.

The Archbishop of New York, Francis Cardinal SPELLMAN, cautioned against a mere generalisation and a purely external participation (*cavendum est a mera divulgatione et participatione tantum externa*) which would only appear to be worship in the Spirit and in the truth.¹⁸

Chiefly in light of his experiences in Berlin, Munich Archbishop Julius DÖPFNER stressed that the spiritual life depends principally upon a fruitful and living participation in the liturgy (*vita spiritualis praecipue pendet a fructuosa et viva participatione liturgiae*) and expressed his satisfaction that although in principle Latin was to remain the liturgical language, the vernacular could also be permitted, above all where the *salus animarum* or the active participation of the people would make it seem advisable (*ubi salus animarum seu actuosa participatio populi hoc suadet*).¹⁹ The remarks of Raul SILVA HENRIQUEZ, Cardinal Archbishop of Santiago/Chile, were of greater theological significance. Since the liturgy is the exercise of Christ’s priesthood in His members, the Cardinal called for an unequivocal statement about the baptismal priesthood of the laity. Dr. Hermann VOLK repeated this request on the following day.²⁰

Archbishop Egidio VAGNOZZI then expressed certain reservations, calling the formulations of the schema rather wordy (*saepe verbosa*), more poetic and ascetical than strictly theological (*magis poetico et ascetico quam stricto theologico sermone concinnata*). He gave several concrete examples of this vague and sometimes theologically inexact manner of expression (*sermoologicus saepe vagus quandoquidem inexactus*). In the subsequent session Cardinal OTTAVIANI also called for the omission of such ambiguities (*relinquere ea quae ambigua possunt esse, vel obnoxia diversae interpretationi*).²¹

In the fifth general session on 23 October 1962, Cardinal RITTER, Archbishop of St. Louis/U.S.A., once more called attention to the fact that the task of a liturgical action, at least in part, is to move the *mentes fidelium* psychologically, i. e. to call forth, support and complete in the faithful (in *eis* causare, nutrire, perficere) devotion and interior worship (*devotionem et cultum internum*).²² It may be noted, however, that the means here proposed actually seem less suitable for accomplishing the pastoral goal desired. Instead of speaking about the psychological and spiritual character traits or dispositions of “contemporary man” as *elementum determinativum et normativum* of a liturgical transformation in general, one

17 Acta synodalia Concilii Vaticani II (Roma 1970) Vol. I, part 1, 267/9. Hereinafter cited as A/S with volume or part number and pages.

18 AS I/1, 316. The passage cited from the *relatio* is to be found at p. 305.

19 AS (note 17) 320.

20 AS (note 17) 324; 359.

21 AS (note 17) 326; 344.

22 AS (note 17) 351/2.

should – if one is going to speak in sociological terms at all – rather investigate carefully the sociological and anthropological foundations of celebration or feast, for example, or the representative role of the bearers of authority in a community, and only then draw the necessary consequences.²³

As the discussion continued, the Archbishop of Camerino/Italy, Giuseppe D’AVACK, urgently requested a precise definition of terms in order to ensure that the conciliar deliberations would bear fruit. In what sense, he asked, are we using terms such as “liturgy,” and the like? The next speaker, William Cardinal GODFREY, Archbishop of Westminster, supported the demand made by Archbishop D’AVACK.²⁴ Regrettably, the remarks of these and other Fathers went unheeded, and the Synod formulated no definitions in the sense of these requests, but rather was content with presenting more or less meagre, scanty descriptions.²⁵ Thus J. PASCHER was able to enumerate nine different “extensions” of the concept “participation.” Some of them he considered theologically significant (e. g. “scienter,” “plena,” “conscia”), others he viewed as less meaningful (e. g. “facilis” or “fructuosa”).²⁶ It is not difficult to understand why this fact continues to be perceived as a deficit. Here is a typical comment:

... the crisis which is rocking the Church today is to a great extent the consequence of that Council. That is not a reproach directed against the Council and its decisions as such; one can rather surmise that these results set standards which were not concrete enough because they were formulated in complicated and wordy texts which therefore require interpretation. ... The concrete statements of the Council have practically never reached their ultimate ‘consumer’ in precise and comprehensible form, and hence that which people today claim to understand as ‘post-conciliar’ is really anything but clear.²⁷

In any event, Louis RASTOUIL, bishop of Limoges, used clear concepts in his written summary of the theological foundations of the priesthood of Christ as the basis for *actuosa participatio*.²⁸

23 On the subject of “feast” see e. g. J. PIEPER, *Zustimmung zur Welt. Eine Theorie des Festes* (München 1963); R. CAILLOIS, *L’homme et le sacré* (Paris 1950²); G. HEILFURTH, *Fest und Feier: Wörterbuch der Soziologie* (Stuttgart 1969²) 275/7 with further literature. On role theory, see e. g. R. DAHRENDORF, *Homo sociologicus: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 10 (1958) 178/208, 345/78 with abundant references. Important reflections on the representative role of those who bear authority within the Church can be found in W. SIEBEL, *Freiheit und Herrschaftsstrukturen in der Kirche: Schriften zur Religionssoziologie* 1 (Berlin 1971), above all 39/52, 59/69. Such considerations appear to gain significance when one recalls what the Archbishop of Durban/South Africa, Denis HURLEY (to take but one example) said in the *aula* of St. Peter’s on 22 October 1962: the Church’s most important manifestation of herself (*praecipua manifestatio Ecclesiae*) is to be found in the full and active participation of the entire People of God in the liturgical celebrations.

24 AS (note 17) 359; 374.

25 Thus G. BARAUNA, *Active participation: the inspiring and directive principle of the Constitution: Idem* (ed.), *The Liturgy of Vatican II* (Chicago 1966) I/132–93, here 134.

26 J. PASCHER, *Das Wesen der tätigen Teilnahme: Miscellanea Liturgica* G. Lercaro (Roma 1966) I/211–29, here 212/4. See also E. J. LENGELING, *Die liturgische Versammlung und die Laien als Mitträger der Liturgie nach dem 2. Vatikanischen Konzil: Jahrbuch des Instituts für christl. Sozialwissenschaften* 7/8 = FS J. Höffner (1966/67) 313/32, here 323, above all note 37. In his written *votum*, Bishop Biagio D’AGOSTINO of Valle di Lucania pleaded for the qualification “pia” on the grounds that greater piety was the final goal of all efforts at reform: AS (note 17) 590.

27 Thus Theo LEMMER in the *Rheinischer Merkur* no. 52 (29 December 1972) 20.

28 AS (note 17) 648/9.

The result of the discussion up to this point was the addition of the words “*vi baptismatis*” in the text of the present article 14, precisely in order to state *expressis verbis* the sacramental basis for liturgical participation (ut fundamentum sacramentale participationis ... verbis exprimatur).²⁹

II.

Since human beings are made up of both body and soul, the *actuosa participatio* of human persons is necessarily internal as well as external: the interior element is the “heart” of the matter, which must be expressed in the exterior participation.³⁰ Since the object of liturgical worship is to promote the self-oblation of the faithful as a spiritual sacrifice in union with Christ,³¹ a constantly more profound transformation in Christ is required, in the sense of the Pauline admonition “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”³²

It may be noted in passing that this *actuosa participatio* may not be equated with concelebration in the strict sense of that term, for two reasons. Firstly, because lay persons lack the sacramental character of orders, and secondly because each participant should carry out all and only those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy.³³

By way of summary, it may be said that at the celebration of Holy Mass, together with Christ, the faithful glorify God the Father in such a way that

they for their part offer to God the same adoration which Christ offers to the Father, and they unite the glorification which they offer, to that glorification offered by Christ. How does all of this occur? Through the fact that in conformity with the mind and heart of Christ they offer their own spiritual sacrifice of themselves to God, acknowledging Him as their Creator and Lord, adoring Him and giving themselves to Him completely in gratitude and love.³⁴

In this sense one can only agree with the mediaeval theologians who say that the forms in which the inner adhesion to Christ’s sacrifice are manifested outwardly, are in fact secondary details – provided that the *interior link* is expressed.³⁵

29 Thus the *relatio* presented on 3 December 1962 by Archbishop FRANCIS GRIMSHAW of Birmingham/England: AS I/4, 170/1. This supplementary emendation was accepted with 2096 “ayes”, 10 “nays” and 7 invalid ballots. See AS I/4, 213.

30 On this see J. PASCHER (note 26) 218/9. The psychological background of this process was described long ago by e. g. Cardinal MERCIER, *Aperçus psychologiques sur la participation des fidèles a la vie liturgique*: QLP 1 (1910/11) 4/11, here primarily 10.

31 A.-M. ROGUET, *Participation in the Mass – the theological principles*: V. RYAN (ed.), *Studies in Pastoral Liturgy* 2 (Dublin 1963) 120/37, here 127.

32 Phil 2/5. On this see R. M. VAN DEN BOSCH, *Actuosa participatio*: *Tijdschrift voor Liturgie* 40 (1956) 323/6, here 324. Instructive also D. v. HILDEBRAND, *Liturgie und Persönlichkeit = Bücher der Geisteserneuerung* 4 (Salzburg 1933) 20/4, 37/42. On the spirit of response to value in the liturgy, especially in the affirmative giving of oneself to the Valuable, see pp. 70/102.

33 Cf. H. LUBIENSKA DE LENVAL, *Un essai de participation à la Messe par le geste et le silence*: LMD 8 (1946) 68/74, here 72. One can of course use the expression in a broader sense, as is done with reference to the 1969 *Novus Ordo Missae* by E. LODI, *Partecipazione attiva o concelebrazione dei fedeli alla Messa?*: *Rivista Liturgica* 57 (1970) 127/42, here e. g. 131/2.

34 Thus B. DURST, *Wie sind die Gläubigen an der Feier der heiligen Messe beteiligt?*: *BenedMon* 25 (1949) 337/54; 417/34, here 432/3.

35 On this see A. KOLPING (note 9) 167.

The church musician who is aware of his responsibilities, is by no means a stranger to the many problems connected with *actuosa participatio*. The active participation which expresses itself in the universally comprehensible language of music demands a firm and solid foundation, which must be sought in a faith which shapes and forms one's whole life.³⁶ Th. B. REHMANN, citing *Mediator Dei*, has strongly emphasised that the concept of a "living" participation³⁷ must needs include the fundamental human attitude toward the liturgy (and indeed toward divine revelation itself): *ex auditu*, an awefilled hearing, a wondering perception. The living worship community arises only from this deeply interior spiritual receptiveness.³⁸ Before the Council ever began, U. BOMM also pointed out that participation in God's redeeming action is a type of mediation. It is from God that the singer receives the words of prayer which he intones, and it is to God that the singer directs his prayerful song – but at the same time he passes this song on to others. Thus the singer shares in the sacramental and liturgical action of Christ and the Church as His interpreter, His herald, His spokesman, as the intermediary who through song interprets the signs of salvation.³⁹

Significant comments were made on this subject during the conciliar deliberations. Thus during the discussion of chapter 7 (= 6 in the final redaction) of the schema, Bishop Peter CANISIUS VAN LIERDE O.S.A. noted that one could not simply ignore the interior participation of the faithful.⁴⁰ The next speaker, Bishop Wilhelm KEMPF, agreed, pointing out that the simple designation of *Musica sacra* as "ancilla Liturgiae" was inadequate because the essence of liturgical song must be expressed more clearly: *ipse cantus praecise est actio liturgica*.⁴¹ Enrico NICODEMO, Archbishop of Bari/Italy, stressed that interior worship is the origin of the universally comprehensible language of music (a cultu interno oritur) and he demanded that the participation of the people be precisely determined (expresse determinetur) in order to avoid harmful differences (ad diversitates vitandas, quae in damnum fidelium cederent).⁴² Success in this area also depends on musical quality, said Bishop Vincenzo RADICIONI of Montalto/Italy. One may not condemn the congregation (populus in ecclesia condemnari non debet) to worthless music or songs of the cheapest type under the pretext of "pastoral need" (sub specie exigentiae pastoralis). Only a music which attracts the congregation through the power of its beauty, sanctity and general appeal will be pastorally effective. Otherwise the people will turn away in disgust (a liturgia abhorrebit) because the music used in the liturgy is inappropriate and banal (ratione deformitatis seu inanitatis). Unfortunately, he concluded, this is often enough the case at present.⁴³

36 See J. OVERATH, *Zum Jahresbeginn: Musica sacra* CVO 80 (1960) 1/3, here 1.

37 G. S., *Actuosa participatio*: CVO 85 (1965) 161/3.

38 Th. B. REHMANN, *Heilige Musik und kultische Feierlichkeit*: CVO 81 (1961) 18/21, here 20. See also the remarks of LENGELING, *Was besagt 'aktive Teilnahme'?*: LJB 11 (1961) 186/8, above all 187/8, whereby the question is whether or not this participation is in fact limited to exclusively interior participation in REHMANN's lecture.

39 U. BOMM, *Kultgesang als tätige Teilnahme am Gotteswerk*: CVO 80 (1960) 5/14, here above all 9.

40 AS I/2, 658.

41 AS (note 40) 659 and see note 44 below.

42 AS (note 40) 740. In this connexion one should recall the remarks of Th. LEMMER cited above.

43 AS (note 40) 749. As far as "pastoral needs" are concerned, see the remarks of Archbishop MIRANDA Y GOMEZ below.

III.

After this brief survey of some fundamental theological aspects, it will be opportune to consider several important musical points. The discussion of *Musica sacra* gained much in clarity from the theologically well-founded observations of Jaime Cardinal de BARROS CÂMARA, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro. During the seventeenth general session on 12 November 1962 he stated that *quoad suam naturam*, *Musica sacra* is a “*pars necessaria vel integrans*” of the solemn Liturgy, *quoad actionem* an “*ancilla Liturgiae*.”⁴⁴ The question was further clarified in 1964 at the General Assembly of the Federated Caecilian Societies at Brixen, by a conciliar *peritus*: it is of primary importance simply because “*agere sequitur esse*.”⁴⁵

During the next general session of the Council, one of the first speakers was the Primate of Mexico, Archbishop Miguel Darío MIRANDA Y GÓMEZ. He insisted that all must learn to grasp the pastoral task and the goal of the Council correctly and completely (*recte et adaequate*) in order to avoid the danger of frustrating the genuinely pastoral purpose by using supposedly “pastoral” means. True pastoral and liturgical progress, he concluded, always brings with it the progress and development of church music as well.⁴⁶

In any discussion of the division of (musical) roles within the Mass, in the sense of “active participation,” one repeatedly hears the phrase “*partes quae ad populum spectant*.” But the problem is precisely to determine which parts “pertain to” the celebrant or the choir on the one hand, and which “pertain to” the participating faithful on the other. J. PASCHER dryly observes that “The Council, of course, does not settle the question.”⁴⁷ The same author opines that here “it could not simply be a matter of those pieces whose actual performance pertains to the congregation, such as the responses to the acclamations.”⁴⁸ On the basis of the greater intelligibility made possible by the vulgar tongue he then attempts to broaden the extension of the “parts which pertain to the people,” and among other things comes to the astonishing conclusion that the Liturgy Constitution considers the recitation and/or singing of the Mass ordinary in the vernacular to be the norm, whereby the Latin form should also not be lost.⁴⁹

However, well-known canonists who have carefully analysed this problem, such as G. MAY and H. FLATTEN, have come to the diametrically opposed conclusion.⁵⁰ And the reluctance with which certain persons accept the unassailable results of such professionally

44 AS (note 40) 588. In this context see the present author’s remarks in CVO 92 (1972) 196/8, here 198.

Bishop KEMPF also spoke in the same vein as Cardinal de BARROS CÂMARA: see note 41 above.

45 Cf. CVO 84 (1964) 194.

46 AS (note 40) 669/70.

47 J. PASCHER, *Das liturgische Recht des II. Vatikanischen Konzils über die Heilige Liturgie: AfkKr* 132 (1963) 385/405, here 396.

48 J. PASCHER, *Augenblicklicher Stand der Liturgiereform und Ausblick auf das Kommende: Liturgiereform im Streit der Meinungen = Studien und Berichte der Katholischen Akademie in Bayern* 42 (Würzburg 1968) 43/59, here 46.

49 PASCHER (note 48) 47/8.

50 G. MAY, *Umfang und Grenzen des Gebrauchs der Landessprache in der Liturgie nach der Gesetzgebung des zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: ÖAfKr* 18 (1967) 16/94, here 16, 17 ff., 46 ff., 58 etc. See also H. FLATTEN, *Zur Rechtslage der Musica Sacra nach dem 2. Vatikanischen Konzil: U. MOSIEK-H. ZAPP (edd.), Ius et salus animarum = FS Panzram* (Freiburg 1972) 171/90, here e. g. 178, 180. This latter text has been published in an authorised English translation by R. SKERIS (ed.), *CruX et Cithara = MuSaMel* 2 (Altötting 1983) 108/21.

qualified study, is more than passing strange. People simply attempt to minimise such conclusions by casting aspersions on them, calling them “completely mistaken and unchurchly”⁵¹ – which surely contributes nothing to the factual explanation of the conciliar texts.

Another attempt at interpreting the concept of “partes quae ad populum spectant” argues from the “principle of functionality” and tries to include the entire Ordinary of the Mass, for example, under the common denominator of “acclamation.” A typical example may be cited here.

The acclamations, too, pertain to the congregation. These include not just the well known short responses such as ‘Glory to you, O Lord’ and the like. The Sanctus, the Kyrie and the Agnus Dei are also acclamations, which the composers of the mediaeval Gregorian melodies – not to mention more modern composers – no longer understood. Hence they pertain to the congregation, as does the Credo, which is a profession of faith and hence not suitable for a lyrical and dramatic interpretation such as many composers have given it. The same is true for the hymn ‘Gloria in excelsis Deo.’

And thus some do not hesitate to speak about “returning the Ordinary of the Mass to the congregation,” concluding that “The reform means. . . the end of complete Mass Ordinaries which are sung by the choir alone.”⁵² Unfortunately, the partisans of such an extreme view have not yet succeeded in presenting a logical explanation of the glaring contradiction evident between their position and the clear pronouncements of Pope and Council.^{52A}

The legitimate liturgist may be permitted the following observations.

- The statement that the liturgy reform means the end of complete Mass Ordinaries which are sung by the choir alone, does not correspond with the facts. For instance, some years ago the diocesan Synod at Vienna passed the following regulation with 244 “ayes,” 24 abstentions and 9 “nays”:

The Ordinary of the Mass can also be sung by the choir, though the congregation may not be completely excluded from singing. In future it is basically no longer permitted to sing Sanctus and Benedictus compositions straight through the Eucharistic Prayer. In order to overcome the resulting problems for traditional church music, after the choir finishes the Sanctus the priest sings or recites the epiclesis, the consecratory prayers and the anamnesis. Then the choir sings the Benedictus, after which the celebrant sings the concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer.

The Ordinary of Vienna, H. E. Cardinal KÖNIG, then made this resolution a diocesan law in accord with the provisions of canon 362 CJC/1917.⁵³

51 For instance, see H. B. MEYER, *Beharrung und Wandel im Gottesdienst: Liturgiereform im Streit der Meinungen* (note 48) 83/108, here above all 103/4.

52 E. J. LENGELING, *Eucharistiefeier und Pfarrgemeinde – Aufgaben nach dem Konzil*: A. EXELER (ed.), *Die neue Gemeinde = FS Filthaut* (Mainz 1968) 136/66, here 147, 149.

52A E. g. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 112, 114; *Notitiae* 2 (1966) 292/3; DOL 506: the conservation and promotion of the *thesaurus musicae sacrae* “are evidently not intended to take place outside that environment in which and for which sacred music was born, but rather within the practical liturgical execution, . . .”

53 *Wiener Synodalbeschlüsse*, Abs. V, *Die Kirchenmusik*, No. 26. Cf. *Wiener Diözesanblatt* of 1 January 1970, as well as J. OVERATH (ed.), *Magna Gloria Domini*: CIMS Salzburg 1972 (Roma 1971) 157.

- Referring to the Sanctus, the Instruction “*Musica Sacra*” of 5 March 1967 states that “...*praestat ab universo coetu una cum sacerdote, de more cantari...*”⁵⁴ A correct canonist explains this text as follows:

But *praestat* means, It is more appropriate, it is more apt and opportune, that the Sanctus usually be sung in common by the entire congregation. In other words, no constantly binding norm, as would appear according to the erroneous German translation, but simply an earnest recommendation to conduct oneself so as a rule. Over and above this, the word *praestat* applies only to non-polyphonic Masses, since for polyphonic Masses it is expressly stated in no. 34, par. 1 of the Instruction that they can be performed by the choir “*suetis normis.*” Making a clear distinction here, no. 34, par. 2 of the Sacred Music Instruction then continues: In *aliis casibus*, therefore not in the case of a polyphonic Ordinary. And only for these other cases is the congregational singing of the Sanctus urged.⁵⁵

- In the mediaeval sources it is impossible to find clear proof that the congregation as a whole, for instance during the Middle Ages, performed prescribed Gregorian chants or recited the texts in common, as is often assumed.⁵⁶
- Finally, it is necessary to remind ourselves that according to canon 18 CJC/1917 (= 17/1983), for the textual interpretation of the Liturgy Constitution we still have at our disposal a legal norm of interpretation in the link between the text to be explained and the intention or mind of the concrete legislator formed before the law was passed.⁵⁷

It will be helpful in this respect to note some of the relevant observations presented during the conciliar discussion. During the eighteenth general session on 13 November 1962 Bishop Peter Canisius VAN LIERDE pointed out that there are certain chants which are meant to be sung by the congregation (*modulationes ad populum destinatae et a populo decantandae*) and others which are to be sung by a choir (*modulation[es] ipsi choro destinatae*).⁵⁸ This

54 AAS 59 (1967) 310.

55 Thus H. FLATTEN (note 50) 188.

56 Thus K. F. FELLNER, *Soziologie der Kirchenmusik = Kunst und Kommunikation* 9 (Köln/Opladen 1963) 27 note 30. See also G. GÖLLER, *Die Struktur der Missa Cantata in der römischen Liturgie*: J. OVERATH (ed.), *Musica Sacra und Liturgiereform nach dem II. Vatikanischen Konzil* (Regensburg 1968) 129/48, here above all 134/41. The matter is well summarised by J. HANDSCHIN, *Die historische Stellung von Gesang und Orgelspiel im Gottesdienst*: H. OESCH (ed.), *Gedenkschrift Jacques Handschin* (Bern 1957) 161/5, here 161: “Many assume that congregational singing indeed existed in the earliest Christian ages, but that it gradually disappeared in the course of the Middle Ages, being totally replaced by the song of the clerics. Though it may be correct to a certain extent, the statement is in any case exaggerated, for community singing never died out completely, even in the Middle Ages. We know that in the larger and more generously endowed churches, the song of the clerics assumed the form of truly artistic singing. But such song is not the product of the exuberant High Middle Ages, or of the Renaissance, for the Church already knew such truly artistic song since the time of Ambrose and Augustine. As this type of song flourished, congregational singing receded into the background during the Middle Ages, but at no time did it disappear completely. The really new development is that in the Middle Ages, the organ gradually came into the Church. ...”

57 See H. BARION, *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Kanonistischer Bericht II: Der Staat* 4 (1965) 341/59, here 358. Now: W. BÖCKENFÖRDE (ed.), *Kirche und Kirchenrecht. Gesammelte Aufsätze Hans Barion* (Paderborn 1984) 519/37, here 536.

58 AS (note 40) 657.

distinction, said the bishop, must be taken into account in any discussion of vocal participation in the solemn liturgy. And in this connexion Archbishop RADICIONI called attention to another important fact: that the choir has a true and proper liturgical role (*habet verum munus liturgicum, et quidem suum proprium*), which is by no means identical with that of the congregation (*et distinctum a munere populi*). From this we can conclude, with the Archbishop, that choral music has its own proper form and substance, distinct from congregational song (*formam ac substantiam distinctam a cantu sacro populari*).⁵⁹

The foregoing considerations make one thing clear: the conscientious and diligent church musician must not allow himself to be misled by onesided (though today unfortunately widespread) misinterpretations of the conciliar texts.⁶⁰ He is rather called – as is every son and daughter of the Church – to demonstrate through his accomplishments in the service of a truly sacred music, a deep and constructive loyalty to the Church, to her clear commands, her authentic traditions, and her authoritative wishes.

59 AS (note 40) 750.

60 Dreadful examples of such misinterpretation can be found in e. g. G. MAY, *Deutung und Mißdeutung des Konzils: AfkKr 135 (1966) 444/72, here 452 ff.* See also F. FEULING (ed.), *Konzilsaussage und Konzilsauslegung (Zürich 1966)*, above all 39/64.



**You have been reading
an English translation of
“Participatio actuosa in
theologisch-musikalischer Sicht:
Überlegungen zu einer Dokumentation”
(Bonn, 1973).**

*This 1973 paper was written by Dr. Robert A. Skeris.
The English translation has appeared in many places,
including EWTN, Crux et Cithara, and the CMAA Magazine.*

He who desires to discuss with profit the promotion of congregational singing must bear in mind some basic facts:

1. It is a fact that liturgical music is an integral part of the liturgy itself, not merely a means to assist or enrich worship. It *is* worship itself, like color to sunset, like thought to the mind. Liturgical music is not *like* prayer; it *is* prayer. Liturgical music raises the mind and heart to God. Thus there must be intelligent listening as well as intelligent singing (mind); thus, artistic music will call up valid emotional response (heart); thus, it must apply not only to neighbor, for worship is directed to God.

2. It is a fact that every liturgical celebration, "because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others."¹ Hence liturgical music, including that provided for the congregation, must be holy. As Saint Pius X phrased it, liturgical music must be "free from all that is profane, both in itself and in the method of performance."

3. It is a fact that the Roman Catholic Church desires that elements from the various indigenous cultures be adapted to her liturgy.² Plainly, every judgment about the various "qualities and talents of races" presumes that these are known quite precisely, and such exact knowledge can be acquired only through close contact with the individual cultures, through careful investigation of their peculiar characteristics.

This applies in a special way to music, since on the one hand music notably intensifies the effectiveness of words and actions, while on the other hand it reveals its structure and function only when it becomes resonant reality in performance.³

4. It is a fact that the conciliar constitution, *Sacrosanctum consilium*, of 1964, favored the greater use of local tongues at those worship services in which the faithful participate. The council's intention was plainly "pastoral," *i.e.*, it wanted to allow the vernacular, within certain limits, a greater place in the liturgy to the extent that this would make easier the active participation of the people in the glorification of God through the worship of the Church. The elevation of the vernacular to the status of a liturgical language was not to affect the primacy of the Latin tongue. Although post-conciliar developments have to a great extent departed from these principles,⁴ it remains true that when Vatican II spoke to the subject of giving the vernacular an appropriate place in the solemn liturgy, it explicitly said *tribui possit* and not *tribuat* (*may be allotted, not is allotted*),⁵ not least in order to enable the faithful of various tongues and nations to pray together.

5. It is a fact that increased liturgical use of local languages created an enormous and sudden demand for music in the various tongues, and this instant call for music found a market at first inadequately supplied. The pastoral problem results from the immediate need to satisfy a present and urgent demand. Though many churchmen purchase wisely but perhaps not well, they all too often can justly point out even today that there is little of value to buy. Pastors are kicking hard at the earth, attempting to get momentum. It will not do to let this willingness of the laity die of inanition, to wait until the Church develops a great vernacular music. Excited, these priests are not about to lie passive in a cultural lag. They have caught the fever, and this is one fever they will not starve; they feed it with any food at hand.

6. It is a fact that there are both possibilities for and limits to congregational singing in the vernacular. Important possibilities were mentioned by the council itself: acclamations of the congregation, responses, psalmody, antiphons, hymns and canticles.⁶ Within a given ethnic and linguistic landscape, congregational singing is also

possible in other contexts less directly connected with the solemn liturgy, for instance, religious processions and pilgrimages to shrines or sanctuaries, private devotions of pious societies, in catechetical instruction, in youth groups, etc.⁷ Apart from the limitation implied by the very term "local language," the council itself mentioned the basic limit within which congregational singing can function: *valeat* (may be able to contribute).⁸ Here it is not only the technical musical factors or the liturgical exigencies (e.g., the changing texts on Sundays and weekdays, feasts and ferials) which play a role, but personal and subjective orientations as well (i.e., those which are less objective and communitarian)⁹. Wherever worship is essentially a mere act of the believer, an expression of his fiducial faith as response to the proclamation of the word, there a truly liturgical language (and indeed, a liturgy) becomes meaningless. The increased emphasis on congregational singing in the vernacular has not succeeded in definitively clarifying the relationship between the subjective and individual as against the objective and social in liturgical worship.¹⁰

In view of these facts, what can the professional church musician, hymnologist and ethnomusicologist do to help the pastors and their people? Dedicated persons have been asking the question for a long time, of course. One answer is obvious: produce and present excellent vernacular church music, but this answer is one step removed from reality. One does not purchase a Palestrina or borrow a Bartok; like pearls of great price, such persons are the product of a rich culture (admittedly wanting), and a great genius (admittedly rare). Need it be added that faith plays an important role here too?

There is also the agony of educating talented musicians, composers, conductors and priests and people! The present time is springtime and seminal; the harvest is in the future. Effective teaching and competent performance are founded on study.

Hymns make up the bulk of any congregation's repertory, and the study of hymns is called, broadly speaking, hymnology. It will be helpful to restrict the following considerations to the strophic hymn, which might be defined as a sacred text in a vernacular language, of Christian character, in metric form and divided into stanzas, with a recurring melody suitable for group singing.¹¹ Every hymn has a number of faces.¹² This means that the literary, musical and religious or theological aspects will all have to be taken into consideration when making a judgment in pastoral practice. This is impossible unless these aspects have been scientifically investigated. There is need for collections, systematic editions and comparisons.¹³ In this connection, even Brazilian scholars have noted with regret the fact that in Brazil or Portugal there are very few notated examples of folk music or popular music from the colonial era. Hence our knowledge of this music is necessarily limited to certain types of songs or dances and their socio-cultural contexts. Accordingly, it is at present possible to investigate both continuity and change in the folk or popular traditions of Brazil only for the relatively recent past and in limited areas. Much the same is doubtless true of Brazilian congregational hymns.

It is the joint task of Brazilian scholars from various disciplines to develop a detailed plan for this work. However, the hymnologist may be permitted to offer a suggestion regarding method. The first step might be to collect the archaic melodies in both folk music and church music, both *musica folclorica* and *musica folcloristica* or *popularisca*. The next step would be to arrange the results of this careful and scientifically accurate collection according to types. Then one would gather all possible examples of these typical melodic forms and list them in synoptic tables. The results will be a picture of the diffusion, which is one of the most important criteria for age and origin.¹⁴ A detailed investigation of types can only be based on exhaustive series of variants.

The various faces of a hymn suggest a systematic order to studying the content of hymns in general. Let us begin with the literary face of a hymn, its text. We must

subdistinguish form and content. Regarding form, one will note whether it is lyrical or a ballad; whether it is didactic or a rhymed gospel or catechism hymn, etc. Important too is the *genus carminis*, i.e., the various ways in which the strophes are constructed and rhymed, the number of accents or syllables per line, etc. Then the content of a hymn text must be scrutinized to ascertain its origin and message. Is it biblical, e.g., from the psalter or the gospels? Is it a liturgical text translated from the missal, the ritual or the antiphonale? Or is it purely private devotional composition which might therefore find only limited use, always bearing in mind that strophic songs *ex natura rei* do not admit of a genuine interpretation of the text by the tune, except perhaps for the first verse.

The musical face of a hymn has obvious contours: melody and rhythm. These must be analyzed by the usual means and described in terms of form, content, etc. But there are also two other factors which should be investigated carefully, not least because of the help they can give to contemporary efforts at creating a Brazilian sacro-musical language and also a congregational song. These factors are the origins of the melodies and their associations.

The German congregational hymn, whose rich and varied history extends much farther back in time than 1524, has often served as an example and source of inspiration for the hymns of other nations. It is a well-known fact that many of the oldest and most beloved German hymns have their melodic origins in other types of music, for example, in Gregorian chant. To mention but a few classic examples from the standard German Lutheran hymnal, *Evgl. Kirchen-Gesangbuch: Nim komm, der Heiden Heiland; Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich; and Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*. They are all based on the Gregorian advent hymn, *Veni redemptor gentium*. *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Erh'* is based on the *Gloria* of the Easter ordinary, *Lux et origo*, whose *Agnus Dei* melody is the source of the tune *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig*. Indeed, in some instances the compilers of hymnals went even farther and simply transcribed entire Gregorian hymns, note for note, into the notation of the age, providing vernacular texts which at least in some cases were scarcely ever sung by a congregation.¹⁵

It is not this phenomenon which is meant by the reference to melodic origins, but rather the process by which a new melody arises out of ingredients and parts of originally different tunes. Insight into this process, which scholars of folksong sometimes term "contamination," implies analysis of the typological melody-building techniques of the middle ages. These can be identified, at least to some degree, if one looks carefully into the workshop of a sixteenth-century melodist like Louis Bourgeois or Kaspar Ulenberg, for instance.

Such investigation reveals that the "com-posers" (*componere!*) often worked from a model, re-singing a tune in the direction of another which was vaguely present in their minds as a model. Careful analysis further reveals that new melodies were not merely parodied, but often constructed out of earlier melodic material (Gregorian chant or secular song). This could occur in several ways: 1) by borrowing a complete melody; 2) by expanding a borrowed tune through repetition, addition or changes in the tonal progression; 3) by changing the borrowed melody through re-positioning some of its parts; 4) by using the framework of the model tune in the first half of the new melody and adding a new second half.

Such research must also carefully tabulate the recurring melodic formulae, be these initial, interior or concluding.¹⁶ In any examination of how melodic prototypes were reshaped and changed, it is useful to apply categories identical with or similar to those familiar from the taxonomy of the musical aspects of re-singing, such as these: 1) taking over and changing, for example by the rhythmic linking of two verse lines, or by melodic abbreviation, expansion or shifting; 2) linking and elaboration following a more or less changed initial form, typing into widely known stereotype melodic turns; 3)

contamination and transformation, whereby the latter term means that the tune is changed in several respects, and that appreciably; 4) common melodic substance (*Substanzgemeinschaft*). Only a more exact investigation of such typological melody-building techniques can reveal the geniality or intensity of a melody¹⁷ and serve the cause of congregational song by helping to create a truly Brazilian language for sacred music.

What can be said about the associations connected with the musical face of a hymn? It is clear that since any truly living church music is continually developing, it is situated in the midst of all the tensions of a given age. As liturgical art, church music is obliged to conform to ecclesiastical law. But to construct artificial polarities between legalistic order and a dynamic church music allegedly called for by the needs of the day would be to forsake the firm foundation of a music rooted in liturgical experience. What *is* in fact the pastoral value of the shoddy, the profane, the third-rate? Evaluation of the sacred and the profane is in any case decisive; their relationships are admittedly shifting in a spatial, temporal and social sense, but they cannot be realized meaningfully without taking into account the praying community which in its various groupings celebrates the Holy Sacrifice.

Church music, which includes congregational hymns, has its own laws and pre-suppositions which, like the Church and her worship, can and must themselves draw a line of demarcation *viv-a-vis* phenomena which correspond, either in fact or in association, to contemporary profane music as it is actually practiced. Can music which resembles social or political protest songs, profane entertainment music or so-called "sacro-pop" in church really correspond with the liturgical meaning of sacred music? The answer to such questions involves problems of theology, and of the ethos and culture of the Church. Even a so-called functional music (in the sense of *Gebrauchsmusik*) possesses its own ethical and artistic values.

It is not the musical shape and character in itself which determines the distinction of sacred and profane, but rather its expression and the soil in which it develops, along with its interpretation or signification in the act of being received by the congregation — in short, its associations. Is it in fact sufficient if the music merely "serves as an expression of the community's life, which is perhaps *de facto* un-Christian?"

The religious or theological face of a hymn is best considered in the light of literary and musical aspects. The cultural anthropologist and the ethnologist will examine this aspect to find testimony about the faith as it was believed and lived in various ages and situations. The theologian will ask whether the texts contain basic truths of correct doctrine or whether they stress more peripheral, decorative and poetic aspects. An incomparable expert on congregational song and music education long ago pointed out that the oldest German congregational hymns deal with the bedrock of the Christian faith, e.g., Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi.¹⁸ Thus one can understand why the great Catholic hymnologists have always worked on an historical basis, striving to return to the original tune and the oldest sources. A purely statistical or tabulatory method will seldom guarantee that we can re-experience the genuine expression of a living faith, hope and charity. Ultimately a hymn is supposed to be the prayerful world of the singing congregation. It is a question of the authenticity of religious expression. Hymns with general, vaguely religious or non-committal texts, and songs which are textually or melodically sentimental and over-emotional cannot contribute to the healthy edification and formation of a community.¹⁹

In every age the congregational hymn has mirrored the faith and piety of those who sang it. From the counter-reformation, hymns have strong accents which were unknown to medieval congregational hymns. For instance, in view of the counter-reformation we can easily understand why hymns to the Blessed Sacrament so strongly

express the real presence and adoration and why we so seldom find hymns embodying the idea of Eucharistic sacrifice in this era. How often have people complained about the lack of hymns expressing the mystery of the Holy Sacrifice! One thinks of the banquet and meal aspect of the Mass which is so over-emphasized in the Church today; this too helps to push the sacramental sacrifice into the background of consciousness.²⁰

From the pastoral aspect interest is concentrated on the results of the comparative investigations of texts, tunes and testimonials to the lived faith. When the answers are set out clearly and concisely, then for all persons of good will who are interested not only in novelty for its own sake, and not merely in superficial and inartistic experiments, but rather in responsible new creations organically rooted in tradition, it will be clear how the texts and tunes can be used by congregations today. It will be easier to determine which hymns can be used within the liturgy and which outside it: at processions, for catechesis, at devotions, as congregational response to the sermon, etc. Every age sings God's praise in its own way and in terms of its own perceptions. It is quite foolish to dispute the right to do so. But it is another question to ask how individual ages and their accomplishments might fare before the bar of later and unprejudiced judgment.

The problem of musical acculturation facing the Church today is by no means new. In the pre-Nicene age, the Church also had to solve the problem of existing as a minority within a hostile culture, and indeed of converting and transforming this milieu. Paradigmatic of the confrontation between Christianity and a non-Christian culture is the figure of Orpheus. It is curious that the only pagan mythological figure to be taken over into early Christian (primarily sepulchral) art was Orpheus.

Textual and monumental evidence from the first three centuries of the Christian era²¹ reveals that the composite figure of Orpheus had by the second century B.C. become "neutral." The figure of Orpheus had become ambivalent, capable of bearing more than one meaning, and hence suggesting different things to different persons. This neutral figure was adapted by the early Jewish apologists, who re-forged one of its component characteristics and thus transformed it into a "prophet of monotheism." In this new guise the figure of Orpheus was a welcome one to the Christian apologists, and as the new meaning was attached to certain aspects of this once completely pagan figure, a new stage in the process of transformation and adaptation was reached in certain of the later catacomb paintings and sarcophagus reliefs. Finally, as the confrontation between antiquity and Christianity grew less acute, the apologetic motive disappeared entirely, and with it disappeared the figure of Orpheus from Christian art. Its place was taken by the gradually emerging images of the Savior for whom Orpheus had helped prepare the way.

Concretely, the patristic literary evidence indicates that the "Testament of Orpheus" was quoted for apologetic purposes not only by Justin and Clement of Alexandria but also by Eusebius, who in mentioning "Aristobulus" explicitly refers to the circle of early Jewish apologists in which this pseudepigraphon was produced. Clement distinguished between various aspects of the Orpheus myth, rejecting the alleged "founder of mysteries" but comparing the mythical singer to the real Christ, the new song, whereby the common element, the *logos*, was developed theologically by application to the Savior.

Clement uses all the techniques developed by his apologist predecessors, but concentrates his attention on the relationship of Christianity to contemporary intellectual culture, without thereby overlooking the level of private and social life. Further, he appears to have made the only attempt at theological reflection on the Orpheus image which goes beyond the mere implications of the priority *topos*. Clement distinguishes between various components of the multifaceted Orpheus legend, and

rejects the fabled founder of mysteries while accepting the personification of song as a point of departure for his Christologically-oriented analogy. It seems that the mythical singer's song, and more, its text (*logos*) served as the bridge over which Clement passed to arrive at a Christian interpretation.

The literary process of theological adaptation took its start from the *logos* or text of Orpheus' song, which was first re-interpreted as testifying to monotheism, and then related to the prologue of Saint John's gospel by Clement. It is theologically significant that in key texts describing the *logos* and the purpose of the new song, Clement has recourse to the Semitic thought pattern which sees the *dabar* (*logos*, word) as the expression of a commanding will, which does effectively what it says.²² It is powerful and operative.

The examples of adaptation in early Christian or late antique sepulchral art appear to have blossomed in a theological atmosphere which was capable of distinguishing between various strata of the Orpheus legend, and thus was not unfriendly to the legendary singer, though it rejected the supposed founder of pagan mysteries quite out of hand. To the extent that the contemporary relationship of the Church and the world of that time is analogous to the situation in the late antique age, Orpheus retains his paradigmatic value, for on the basis of his example it appears possible to trace the stages of an actual case of adaptation.

These stages were marked by critical reflection based on clear standards, and show no evidence of mere opportunism. At the risk of oversimplifying, they may be schematized thus: 1) Is a given element of pagan culture irreconcilably opposed to Christian morals or dogma? If so, is it completely rejected; if not, a second question was asked. 2) Is it neutral? Is it at a given moment transparent enough to be able to allow a Christian content to shine through? If not, or not yet, then Christian substitutes are to be offered. If necessary, distinctions must be made, and aspects capable of adaptation can be developed so as to lead, by an organic process of growth, to a fully Christian culture.

The need for such critical evaluation is unfortunately not always perceived. For example, the attitude of the Christian pastors and teachers of the first three centuries is the exact opposite of the well-meaning but witless enthusiasm which proclaims that all texts, actions and music are proper and effective in worship to the degree that they serve the active participation of the wandering people of God. The ancient figure of Orpheus still has a lesson to teach us today, for it remains true that the prophet's statement, "Remember not former things, and look not on things of old," applies neither to hymnology nor to theology.²

By way of conclusion, we may summarize the pastoral significance of the congregational hymn. It is a mirror image of popular piety. To the extent that it can be called a spiritual folksong, it is a product of popular or plebian art (*Volkskunst*), and every work of art is a symbol. The language of symbols and images begins at the point where the language of everyday life or science reaches its uttermost limits. The congregational hymn, though it also radiates its own formative power, presupposes a living congregation. Whatever has been born of the spirit of liturgical community also possesses the power to help form this community anew whenever it has been dispersed. The congregational hymn is the artistic and symbolic expression of a community united not just externally, in sorrow or joy, but united internally in God. The fundamental pre-supposition for both a serious revivifying of old hymns and the creation of new ones, is the rebirth of the parish community.

Here lies the challenge for the Church as well as for the society in which she subsists. Let us go forth together to meet this challenge with Christ-Orpheus as our guide along the way.

REVEREND ROBERT A. SKERIS

NOTES

1. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, art. 7. *Actio sacra praecellenter.*
2. *Ibid.*, art. 37.
3. J. Kuckertz.
4. G. May, "Umfang und Grenzen des Gebrauchs der Landessprache in der Liturgie nach der Gesetzgebung des zweiten Vatikanische Konzils," *Osterreichisches Archiv fur Kirchenrecht* (1967), Vol. 18, p. 16-94.
5. Constitution on the Sacret Liturgy, Art. 54.
6. Cf. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (1964), Vol. 56, p. 97-138.
7. Cf. Pius XII, "Musicae sacrae disciplina," *Acta Apoltolicae Sedis* (1956), Vol. 48, p. 21-22.
8. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Art. 114: "in qualibet actione sacra in cantu peragenda universus fidelium coetus actuosam participationem sibi propriam praestare valeat..." See also Art. 28 and 30. Regarding "partes quae ad populum spectant," see R. Skeris, "Participatio actuosa in theologisch-musikalisher Sicht," in H. Lonnendonker, ed., *In caritate et veritate. Festschrift J. Overath*. Saarbrücken: ACV Schrifteneihe (1973), Vol. 8, p. 121-30.
9. The deeper reasons why individualistic persons or groups are not easily moved to more active liturgical participation have not yet been analyzed sufficiently. This would be a fruitful field for investigation by all those who are specially concerned with questions of pastoral liturgy.
10. Cf. R. Guardini, "Das Objektive im Gebetsleben," *JbLw* (1921), Vol. 1, p. 117-125.
11. See *RISM*, Vol. 1, No. 2; *DKL*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 20*. Kassel, 1980. This modern, less restrictive definition may be compared with the older one by W. Baumker, "Das katholische deutsche Kirchenlied" in his *Singweisen*, Hildesheim, 1962, Vol. 1, p. 5-16. A strophically organized spiritual song in the vernacular which because of its churchly character is suitable for singing by the entire congregation during worship services (regardless of whether these take place in church or not) and to this end has been either silently tolerated or expressly approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority.
12. J. Gotzen, "Vom alten deutschen Kirchenlied," *CVO* (1931), Vol. 62, p. 79-85.
13. In 1955, Pius XII advised that songs of this kind be collected and brought together in a single source. Cf. H. Mersmann, "Grundlagen einer musikalischen Volkslied-forschung III. Vergleichende Melodienbetrachtung," *AfMw* (1923), Vol. 5, p. 81-135.
14. For further detail regarding method, see W. Wiora, "Zur Frühgeschichte der Musik in den Alpenländern," *Schriften der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde*, Basel, 1949. Vol. 32, p. 213-219.
15. Cf. Leonhard Kethner, *Hymni*, Nürnberg, 1555, a collection of 28 old Cistercian hymn tunes. For an example, see W. Baumker, *op. cit.*, No. 344. On the topic as a whole, see B. Maerker, "Gregorianische Gesang und Deutsches Volkslied, einander ergänzende Quellen unserer musikalischēn Vor- und Frühgeschichte," *JbfVf* (1941), Vol. 7, p. 71-127. Note the additions and corrections presented by E. Jammers, "Zum Rezitativ im Volkslied und Choral," *JbfVf* (1951), Vol. 8, p. 86-115.
16. This has been stressed by J. Overath, "Untersuchung über die Melodien des Lied-psalters von Kaspar Ulenberg (Köln 1582)," *Beitrage zur rheinischen Musikgeschichte*, Köln, 1960, Vol. 33.
17. Cf. W. Wiora, "Systematik der musikalischen Erscheinungen des umsingens," *JbfVf* (1941), Vol. 7, p. 128-195.
18. J. Hatzfeld, "Urgestein des christlichen Glaubens," *Theologie und Glaube* (1941), Vol. 33, p. 220 ff; also in J. Overath, ed., *Priester und Musiker*, Düsseldorf, 1954, p. 189-201.
19. J. Overath, "Zum Gesangbuch," in Th. Schnitzler, ed., *Vorbeterbuch zum Kölner und Aachener Gebetbuch*, Köln, 1960, p. 28-35.
20. See J. Ratzinger, "Gestalt und Gehlt der eucharistischen Feier," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift* (1977), Vol. 6, p. 385-396. Also, J. Overath, "Die Kirchenmusikpflege der Kölner Jesuiten im 17. Jahrhundert," In H. Litjens & G.M. Steinschulte, ed., *Divini cultus splendori, Festschrift Joseph Lennards*, Rome, 1980, p. 233-248.
21. Cf. R. Skeris, *Chroma theou, Musicae Meletemata*, Altotting, 1976.
22. Cf. his *Protreptikos*.
23. Isaiaas 43: 18.