Hymns: the Sound of Communion

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NEARLY EVERY assessment of Anglican patrimony mentions the hymns. Can these seemingly essential elements of the "objective reality" that will form an Anglican Use be reconciled with the Roman rite from which it derives? Is each distinctive and separate, or can two integrities be combined?

English hymns in Catholic liturgy

Paul Inwood, Diocesan Director of Music for Portsmouth, said in the Society of St Gregory's James Crichton Memorial Lecture for 2008, "Hymns are foreign to the Eucharist." This is a common view among liturgists. It has quite a pedigree. *A Bitter Trial* (ed. Scott Reid, St Austin Press, 1996), gathers the correspondence of Evelyn Waugh and Cardinal Heenan on the reforms after Vatican II. Waugh was concerned that Catholic identity would be wiped away as liturgical customs were absorbed from the Church of England. He even feared the Protestantisation of the Mass and a vindication of Reformation doctrine: what had the martyrs died for? Heenan sympathised and wanted the vernacular Catholic liturgy to be free of usages that characterised Anglicanism. Instead, he wanted the reformed rites and their translation into the language of the present day to be characteristic of Catholicism.

Sadly the noble intention to produce worship in English that surpassed the *Book of Common Prayer,* the Coverdale psalter and the vast body of hymns was accomplished neither swiftly nor comprehensively enough. Suggestions that *Hymns Ancient and Modern* or *The English Hymnal* be authorised for Catholic usage (with some adaptation and supplementation) were dismissed. In view of the uneven development of "distinctively Catholic" collections since, this was a missed opportunity. Had they been embraced, even if only to be quickly superseded, how formative they could have been to the development of a genuinely Catholic body of hymnody in English. Instead, hymns are used as auxiliary items to the forms of Catholic liturgy, not as an integrated complement, as in Anglican worship. No wonder they are seen as English and foreign, not Roman. The irony is that hymns are also foreign in origin to the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer,* which excluded almost all chants but the psalms, the *Sanctus, Gloria in excelsis* and a few others. Yet the Church of

England came to absorb hymns and make them her own. From 1870, the standard Anglican Evangelical equivalent to *Hymns Ancient and Modern* bore the title *The Hymnal Companion to the Book of Common Prayer* (it was exhaustive – a worthy precursor of modern Catholic hymnbooks that serve as liturgical handbooks too). Likewise, whether we like it or not, English hymnody has taken hold in the vernacular celebration of Mass. But we are not quite decided on how it should form a companion to Catholic liturgy and be welcomed as a trusted complement.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, in common with other Bishops' Conferences round the world, is addressing this and will be preparing a directory of hymns in English expressly approved for liturgical use. For a century and a half there have been Catholic collections of hymns in English for singing outside the liturgy, such as after Vespers with other devotions, at Benediction, sermons, missions, processions and pilgrimages (as in *The Path to Heaven,* the Burns & Oates collection of private and public devotions from 1866, with nearly 300 hymns, many newly written or translated, and bearing Manning's *imprimatur*). During the twentieth century especially, the custom of singing vernacular hymns over the recitation of the Latin Propers at Low Mass also took hold. But the directory will not merely list hymns for being sound and useful. Its main concern will be hymns that are congruous with the teaching of the Catholic Church so that they can be approved for use within the liturgy, as part of it, when the Proper of the Roman Rite (that is, the variable set chants, psalms, antiphons and responsories with their music) is not employed and the rules allow for "some other suitable song" *(alius cantus congruus).*

In contrast to Eastern Christian liturgy with its vast store of hymns and poetry, the Roman Catholic Church's mass Proper is drawn almost entirely from the psalms. So at first glance, metrical psalmody in English is an obvious seam to mine (e.g. William Kethe's Psalm 100, *All people that on earth do dwell,* from the 16th century collection by Sternhold and Hopkins; Tate and Brady's Psalm 42, *As pants the hart for cooling streams* from the 17th century; Isaac Watts' Psalm 90, *O God, our help in ages past,* from 1707). But the directory is unlikely to draw heavily on this treasury. For the new translation of Mass texts, a revised version of the Grail psalter has been determined, despite its flaws (it skews the translation to fit a conjecture about the kind of melodies that fitted the Hebrew poetic rhythms, in order to promote rhythmic common singing in today's vernacular; but our Latin tradition has used a prose translation of the prose Greek Septuagint from at least the fourth

century and this forms the basis of our Gregorian chanting of the psalms. Singing the Grail psalter has not really caught on so widely as the Jerusalem-Gélineau psalms did in France. Can we not, therefore, sing a prose translation in England to easy plainsong tones, as many Anglicans did for generations to the Coverdale psalter, and some still do – or make imaginative use of the patrimony of metrical psalms, as Catholics sometimes do in Germany and the Low Countries?). Regrettably leaving aside, then, the metrical psalmody, the reservoir of approved hymns and chants will be filled from several other sources:

- classic English hymnody (the Congregationalist Isaac Watts, author of *When I survey the wondrous cross,* is its true father; but earlier the Non-Juror Bishop Thomas Ken, wrote the superb *Her Virgin eyes saw God incarnate born*);
- English Catholicism's own classic hymns (*The Catholic Hymn Book,* Gracewing, 1998, has restored more of this somewhat eclipsed nineteenth century Roman Catholic patrimony – a good deal is better known in Anglican worship now than in Catholic settings, e.g. Edward Caswall's *All ye who seek a comfort sure,* or his fellow Oratorian Frederick Faber's magnificent *My God, how wonderful thou art*);
- translations of Latin, Greek, Syriac and Lutheran hymnody;
- hymns embraced over the years from other Christian traditions (like Reginald Heber's *Holy, holy, holy,* and Walter Chalmer Smith's *Immortal, invisible God, only wise*);
- some unfamiliar treasures that deserve a reception into Catholic worship (e.g. William Bright's *Once, only once, and once for all;* Charles Wesley's *And can it be?,* Henry Ramsden Bramley's rare *The great God of heaven*);
- recent compositions (both in the traditional hymn format, like James Quinn SJ's *Forth in the peace of Christ,* and in the newer "liturgical song" style, like Marty Haugen's controversial *Gather us in,* or Daniel Schutte's *I, the Lord of sea and sky*); and
- international items reflecting the cultural diversity of Catholics at worship in England and Wales today.

But it is a tall order to find strophic hymns (hymns that repeat metrical or rhythmical verses to the same melody) that will fit in the Catholic liturgy and correspond to the Proper chants of the *Graduale Romanum,* the Missal and the Lectionary. Elements of the Roman Proper go back over 1,500 years and more. Our English hymn tradition was developed

comparatively recently, mostly in the last 300 years, and for markedly different purposes.

Hymns in the Anglican liturgy

For instance, the Anglican Prayer Book Holy Communion service deliberately excluded Proper chants on account of their association in the pre-Reformation Sarum rite with the Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Real Presence (specifically the ceremonial preparation of the gifts at the Gradual and their transfer to the altar during the Offertory). As for the offices, few songs other than those in the Scriptures were needed. The only concession was to allow a metrical psalm before and after the set liturgy, not in the midst of it.

Classic Anglicanism not only rejected the purpose liturgical chants were put to in Catholic worship, it also rejected hymns because they reflected the ex tempore worship and preaching of what they saw as "Nonconformist" Protestants. Those we nowadays honour as fellow Christians in the Free Churches held that set formulae could impede the freedom and inspiration essential to preaching the Gospel and "worship in Spirit and in truth". But Anglicans (and Presbyterians) reckoned that such spontaneity led to heterodoxy and even subversion (Milton, for instance, was a supporter of Cromwell's Commonwealth and also Arian, probably Unitarian). "Independent" Christians of the non-established Protestant churches were suspect for being free of the state. Likewise their choice of hymns, psalms, Scriptures and prayer was seen to be making free with divine service and true doctrine. Hence an instinctive Anglican aversion to abandoning the appointed order, whether in liturgy or prelacy. So – no hymns or psalms *ad libitum.*

But this was relaxed, and indeed richly developed, in the 150 years following the Restoration of the Church of England with King Charles II after the Commonwealth. When the dissenting congregations were closed down, or forced to worship as Anglicans, something of their musical spirit permeated the parish liturgy of the Established Church. There grew a tradition of homespun or Nonconformist-borrowed psalms, anthems, carols and hymns sung by the West Gallery musicians, famed at their dying moment by Thomas Hardy. In turn, this popular music-making lost ground to a romantic search for the disappeared Christian ideal of the Middle Ages. The resulting re-imagination of worship consciously raised musical and liturgical standards, also restoring the Eucharist more to centre stage. Thus by the second half of the nineteenth century, a standard Anglican liturgical hymnody – with

hymnbooks, robed choirs and organs in the chancel – truly becomes established.

By absorbing "ancient and modern" hymns for the congregation to sing, Anglican worship was transformed, because (after the earlier example of John and Charles Wesley and the Methodists) the hymns could absorb the people. They could convey the religious meaning of services, nourish popular devotion with doctrine and Scriptural substance, and they could help people to put faith into words and practice. Thus there was a flood of translations of Greek and Latin hymnography (thanks to such a peerless master as John Mason Neale) and classic German chorales (from Catherine Winkworth and George Woodward the carollist). A lesson was taken from the Evangelicals too – hymns were about preaching the Gospel, nurturing conversion and forming discipleship (look to William Cowper and John Newton, for instance). Many of the best loved hymns assimilated by Anglicans, as they created their own kind of sung Proper for a retrieved sense of liturgy, come from the great Evangelical and Independent preachers (such as the Wesleys, Isaac Watts and John Bunyan). From the Anglican Tractarian, Broad and Reformed traditions alike came gems of new writing that all have come to share as their own (such as the hymns of John Keble, Henry Williams Baker, William Bright, Mrs Alexander, Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, Robert Bridges, John Ellerton, Bishop Walsham How, Percy Dearmer and, more recently, Christopher Idle and Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith). And, by long custom, hymns were freely borrowed from other Christian traditions, notably those of the Oratorians John Henry Newman, Edward Caswall and Frederick Faber (but scarcely Ronald Knox – not the translator of verse that Caswall and Neale were); or of John Greenleafe Whittier and Philip Doddridge. There have also been the "hymn explosion" of the latter half of the twentieth century (Fred Pratt Green, Fred Kaan, Michael Perry, Brian Foley and Michael Saward being further significant contributors); the absorption of chants from Taizé (by Jacques Berthier) and Iona (from John Bell and Graham Maule); modern Catholic liturgical songs (e.g. those of Christopher Walker, Bernadette Farrell, Stephen Dean and Paul Inwood) and worship songs from modern Evangelical worship (notably those of Graham Kendrick). This is to say nothing of the composers whose music has shaped the enduring popularity and value of other authors' texts. Indeed *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (first published in 1861 as an effort to produce a standard hymnbook for Anglican worship) was edited by musicians for most of its history (William Monk, Charles Steggall, Sydney Nicholson; the name of James Bacchus Dykes, composer of tunes to *Holy,*

holy, holy and Cardinal Newman's *Lead, kindly light,* is also illustrious). And the genius of the *English Hymnal* (1906 and 1933) surely belongs to its musical editor, Ralph Vaughan Williams (and J. H. Arnold who arranged its Sarum chant), as much as to the editor of the words, Percy Dearmer.

Hymns and the Proper of the Roman Rite

An irony of the bishops' work to identify good English hymnody is that the Divine Office is already par excellence the home to liturgical verse in the Latin tradition, and has been since the time of St Ambrose in the fourth century at least. For instance, inspired in his fight against Arianism by the orthodox Christian writers of Greek and Syriac hymns, he wrote *Veni redemptor gentium: Come, thou redeemer of the earth.* He was followed by Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth century *(Vexilla Regis prodeunt: The royal banners forward go)* and Hrabanus Maurus in the ninth *(Veni, Creator Spiritus: Come, Holy Ghost our souls inspire).* This gold has been gratefully raided by Anglicans for the development of their own tradition, not least for the Office, from which non-Biblical hymns were once excluded (although a prose-hymn dating back in part to the third century, *Te Deum Laudamus,* had been retained). In the contemporary Catholic Church in England and Wales the Office is hardly ever sung in parishes and so there is little opportunity to make use of this ancient Catholic patrimony, either in Latin or translation. A further irony is that, for most practical purposes, the hymns in the directory will be for singing at Mass, whereas in the Mass of the Roman Rite hymns do not figure largely (although the sequences have a different history, to which we will return).

There are traces of early Christian Latin verse in the Roman Propers (one introit uses Sedulius' *Salve Sancta Parens* from the 5th century, drawing on Virgil's *Aeneid*), but they are mostly drawn from the psalms and other Scriptures, as we have noted. So when it comes to drawing up a directory of "other suitable songs" to stand in for them, the body of hymns that now constitutes an essential component of Anglican liturgical culture is not equivalent to the Roman *Graduale.* Whereas the *Graduale* chants are integral to the Roman Mass, Anglican hymnody evolved as a discretionary augmentation to the set order. Furthermore, it serves a didactic and missionary purpose, which is not the function of the *Graduale.* We are not comparing like with like. Perhaps the apt thing to say is that the fluid usage that is Anglican hymnody constitutes a distinctive form of Proper, with a character that differs fundamentally from that of the Roman rite. But it is actually much more structured than is realised. See, for instance, the Table of

Hymns for Sundays and Holy Days in the *English Hymnal* (first issued in 1906), which sets out an Office and additional hymns for each Mattins and Evensong, and for each Sunday Eucharist a hymn for before the Gospel, at the Offertory, Holy Communion and after the Blessing.

But can these two approaches to what the variable chants are – differing in origin, purpose and content – ever be compatible? When an Anglican Use is reconciled with the Roman rite in Catholic Ordinariates, can English hymns be uncoupled from their early Anglican and Free Church *raison d'être* as auxiliaries to preaching and teaching? Can they be recast as a body in its own right, something thus intrinsically Catholic, to serve as a complement to the Roman Mass Proper and its indigenous reliance on the psalms?

In setting out to answer with a tentative "yes" (not least because some Anglicans have been achieving it for years), we should first acknowledge that both the Roman Proper and this proposed English complement are both to be sung. Singing the Roman Proper is inseparable from the celebration of Mass with the other texts and prayers of the Ordinary and the Sacramentary. This is widely disregarded in practice. A "Low" Mass, in which the texts to be sung are spoken, is a concession to circumstances. It is permitted for good reason, but it is an aberration (as it would be in the Byzantine tradition). As Pope Benedict observed in an essay on *Liturgy and Sacred Music* in the Winter 1986 issue of the review *Communio* (English edition 13, No. 4).

> Wherever man praises God, the word alone does not suffice. Conversation with God transcends the boundaries of human speech and, in all places, it has by its very nature called music to its aid.

Just saying the Propers has allowed Catholics to arrive at the assumption, also found in Anglican culture, that the unchanging portions of the rite form a "core", to which the chant texts are secondary, even optional enhancements for singing only when practical or appropriate. In Free Church worship too, where hymns give doxological and teaching structure, they are nonetheless ancillary to the central event of preaching and its related invocation and supplication. To the Roman rite, however, the variable sung Propers are indispensable and replacements should not lightly substitute for them. Singing them – as the norm – better reveals the true shape and character of the Mass. If an Anglican Use (which traditionally selects from the hymns to serve as its Proper) is integrated with the Roman rite (which does not), the mutual enrichment of the two traditions requires an appraisal of what both elements are expected to contribute. Recalling the "spiritual ecumenism" of Vatican II's

Decree on Ecumenism, the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Cœtibus* envisages that that both traditions can be receptive to each other and that their union will be fruitful. So how can hymns add something valuable, without being mere substitutes, and certainly without diminishing the value of what is already there? How can the Propers shape the selection of hymns and their suitable deployment at the celebration of Mass? Perhaps the directory will address such principles.

Identity and Integrity

For there to be two-way learning and a genuine exchange of gifts that is not a mere amalgamation, first the integrity of the English hymn tradition needs to be acknowledged. It is not an undefined genre of random items that can be selected at will to add variety and pace, illustration or punctuation to a basically said service, but a single, many-layered, multi-faceted set of resources from which hymns are drawn systematically and deployed judiciously. This unselfconscious and nuanced art, often unremarked, is as much a part of the Anglican patrimony as the hymns themselves. See the exhaustive tables of hymn proposals on the Anglican *Oremus* website, the Hymns Suggested for Sundays list in the *New English Hymnal* (1986), its update in *New English Praise* (2006), and the list in *Common Praise* (the 2000 successor to *Hymns Ancient and Modern*) as further evidence.

A second, larger step is the Catholic retrieval of a sense of the Roman Rite's native Proper and its restoration to prominent, sung use in its integrity, whether in Latin or the vernacular. Two recent books illustrate the scale of this challenge for both liturgy and individual piety. Professor László Dobzay, writing from a classic Latin Catholic perspective, has made constructive proposals for a re-integration and mutual perfection of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite in *The Restoration and Organic Development of the Roman Rite* (T&T Clark International, London, 2010). Bishop Andrew Burnham, writing out of Anglo-Catholicism's receptivity to the Latin tradition in translation, calls for "the re-enchantment of Liturgy" in his appealing *Heaven and Earth in Little Space* (Canterbury Press, Norwich 2010). Both observe how the problem for the Roman sung Proper is one of identity:

a) the reformed Latin *Graduale Romanum* (Solesmes, 1974) failed to restore all the psalm verses needed at the Introit, Offertory and Communion so that chants can form substantial pieces of liturgy at key points

b) the complexity of the chants is beyond the means of most churches. Without simpler alternative melodies, the ancient texts now lie largely unknown
c) the *Graduale Simplex* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, 1975) was intended to provide simplified melodies, but actually sets texts other than those in the *Graduale Romanum* (although it provides additional psalm verses)
d) the texts for the Entrance Antiphon, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and Communion Antiphon in the Missal and Lectionary in use since 1970 are different again. There is not necessarily a corresponding musical chant in either *Graduale.* No psalm verses are given for the Introit and Communion; the Offertory chant is omitted. The liturgical reformers assumed they were to be sung, but even after forty years a comprehensive setting of the new texts in English, whether to new compositions or plainsong formulæ, has not been published. Only online do we find Samuel Weber OSB's remarkable, full provision from the Institute of Sacred Music in the Archdiocese of St Louis. A simpler approach is Columba Kelly OSB's online *Sacred Music Project,* setting the Introit, Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and Communion. The generous provision published in *By Flowing Waters* (ed. Paul Ford, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1999) is far from complete. But we await the publication of the Society of St Gregory's *Processional* – a setting of the given texts and psalms in verse-refrain format for the Entrance, Offertory and Communion – with anticipation.
e) A large quantity of contemporary settings of the responsorial psalms has been composed, with varying quality and uneven acceptance. There are a number of more or less complete collections, but the Psalms are those appointed in the Lectionary, not the Proper chant given in the *Graduale.* Beyond the use of the "The 23rd Psalm" to the tune Crimond at weddings and funerals, little attention has been given to the potential for using metrical psalms at this point, whether to reflect the Lectionary Psalm or the Gradual verses.

This "multiple identity" goes beyond the embarras de richesse, treasures old and new, Latin and vernacular, that the Western Catholic tradition has in its possession. For there is no single body of chants for the revised Roman Mass rite, however diverse, that we can identify with as the "second nature" chants proper to our liturgy's seasons, Sundays and feasts. Instead there are four: the

chants of the Extraordinary Form (as in the *Liber Usualis*); the Ordinary Form's *Graduale Romanum;* the *Graduale Simplex;* the chant-texts in the Missal and Lectionary. An array of rival authorities so bewildering renders each a mere option. No wonder we fall back on a fifth choice with some relief: "some other suitable song" and the vast deposit of hymns in English.

But using hymns like that – as any student of Wesley or seasoned Anglican organist will tell you – does them a disservice. It is not a matter of choice and favourites, but of design and fit. Before hymnody can be pressed into service for the Catholic Mass in English on a principled basis, the Roman rite needs to identify its core Proper, whether in Latin or the vernacular, whether using Gregorian chant or the work of original composers (a contemporary example being Scotland's James MacMillan). James Quinn SJ, who was among the first to turn his hand to writing corporate strophic hymns in order to reflect what he saw as the spirit and newness of the rite of Mass in the vernacular, said that hymns are to be "a rich Scriptural quarry … to convey the words of Christ memorably" (see his obituary in the *Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 264, July 2010). Thus in the Society of St Gregory's quarterly, *Music & Liturgy,* there are well thought out suggestions for hymns and other songs related to the readings each Sunday. They still do not, however, correspond to the texts of the Propers, which in any case do not necessarily relate to the Scriptures of the day. A different approach is needed: one that can determine how the English hymns can serve as complements to the Roman Proper, but also appreciate them on their own terms.

Hymns as Active Participation

Such an authoritative examination of the relation of hymns to Catholic liturgy has not been undertaken in Britain in any great depth before. The bishops' Liturgy Office has issued occasional guidance; individual bishops have also made their views known. Otherwise, the Catholic Church in this country has been content not to regulate texts and music that serve as "some other suitable song". And while there have been officially endorsed collections (such as the *New Catholic Hymnal* in 1971 and the *New Catholic Hymn Book* of 1998), the books used more widely have not troubled to seek an imprimatur (Kevin Mayhew's *Hymns Old and New* in various editions, 1977-2008; McCrimmon's veteran *Celebration Hymnal* series; and *Laudate* in 1999 from Decani). All of them now form liturgical resource books, not just hymnbooks (and imitate the groundbreaking *English Hymnal's* tables of hymns according to Sunday and feast, theme and season); so they are designed

for choosing hymns and other songs by means of informed discretion at parish level. Indeed this is assumed to be what the rules provide for and even expect. And because the Proper chants are seen as inaccessible, guidance in the General Instruction on the Roman Missal promoting "active participation" *(participatio actuosa)* seems to favour newly written chants or readily available English hymns for the faithful to "join in".

I once attended Choral Evensong at Durham Cathedral when a lady took her view of joining in the Common Prayer to an extreme. She sang with the choir not only for the psalms, but also the Canticles by Brewer in D (she was thwarted by the anthem). But "joining in" is much less than what "active participation" is about. The phrase comes from Pius X's 1903 *motu proprio* on sacred music, *Tra le sollecitudini.* He wanted to discourage theatrical performances of music lest they render the people passive observers. He wanted the liturgy's corporate action, its prayers, readings and music, not to be a spectacle, but to engage the full attention of people's heart, mind and body. The aim was to lead people on from private devotional material, however sanctifying, so that they would be moved to follow the public prayer of the Church more consciously and thus connect their interior worship more closely with the rite which the priest was celebrating at the altar. It tends to be forgotten that the early work of the twentieth century Liturgical Movement arising from this document was not the promotion of change but of restoration – with popular editions of the Missal containing translations of the rites, readings and Propers, and related devotions, so that people could "own" the liturgy and cultivate a spirituality that was less individualistic and more conscious of life in the Body of Christ. (The "Dialogue Mass", encouraging the people, not just the server, to answer Low Mass, comes from this period before the First World War.) Pope Pius presented the singing of the Mass music as central to this greater involvement on the part of the faithful. New, simpler editions of Gregorian chant enabled parishes to sing Sunday mass and vespers more fully – giving choirs the resources to sing the Proper and encouraging the people to sing the Ordinary *(Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus* and *Agnus)* and a small core of other regular chants.

"Active participation" therefore does not mean everyone joining in with every word: the ministers, musicians and the people each have distinctive roles within the whole. Participation is thus both personal and corporate, involving activity to fulfil one's own part as well as to follow the parts of the others. Waiting on others, being an engaged observer, is no less active than waiting on God in contemplation. Confusing active participation with the need to

"join in", regardless of the many layers and complementary yet different roles that make up the liturgy of the Body of Christ, is to limit it. And this in turn demotes it in significance. When English hymnody is used just to give the congregation something to do, as if assisting through other parts of the liturgy was doing nothing, it distorts its purpose in the non-Catholic traditions that formed it and undervalues the use to which it can be put in the Roman liturgy.

For instance, the corporate singing of a hymn can be pastorally and culturally useful to focus worship in common. At the ordination of 12 former Anglican priests in 1995 at Westminster Cathedral, amid the sense of gladness and expectation, there was also awareness of media controversy and "the parting of friends" among the mixed congregation of Catholics and Anglicans. The tension lay unresolved, until, after *Veni Creator* and the chrismations, the precentor inserted very nearly the greatest of all the Wesley hymns: *O thou, who camest from above.* Immediately all thoughts were of undivided worship and service: *Ready for all thy perfect will.* Contrast that with Christmas Day 2009 at St George's Cathedral, Southwark. The chants of the Ordinary and Proper were sung in Latin and the faithful were furnished with translations. Just two carols were printed for the people to join in – they too were in Latin, but there was no translation. The reason why the first example was a success was its sensitivity to the way in which the Anglican liturgical tradition uses hymnody on such occasions. The second failed because the hymns technically gave the congregation something to "join in", but not the means for their mental and liturgical engagement.

Complementing the Roman Proper – Hymns or Liturgical Songs?

Using hymns as genuine complements to the Roman rite and its Proper, and the way in which hymnody forms a different kind of Proper for classic Anglican liturgy, may be two different things. But without doing harm to the integrity of either tradition, they can inform each other and then be brought into fortuitous relationship. Comparing the characteristic Anglican custom of selecting a large number of variable hymns at the Eucharist with the solid normativity of the chants in the Roman *Graduale,* it is easy to miss how the English hymn tradition could be a welcome gift that the wider Catholic Church might find room for. It may have derived from an Anglican rupture from the Latin tradition, but it also embodies Anglicans' "faith instinct" of their continuity with the ancient common tradition, drawing and recycling hymns from two millennia in East and West. So when hymns from this patrimony are selected for use in the Catholic Mass without an appreciation

of how hymnody in Anglicanism was formed organically – or how to deploy it – it can appear to be alien. Paul Inwood's criticism would thus be just.

Here the mistake is to treat hymns simply as a random collection of individual items. Yet to those who are aware of English hymnody's entwined threads and who understand how the different parts can fit together, it is a seasoned whole with its own internal balance and spiritual, cultural hinterland. A leading scholar on the hymns of the Wesleys is Professor Francis Frost, a Catholic priest from the Diocese of Salford, who points out that their hymns form a systematic doxological theology. So hymns, conceived and ordered as a body, genuinely provide a mainstay in the changing cycle of the liturgy and render it constantly familiar again and again. Indeed, the apparently arbitrary re-arrangement and variety of the hymns depends on the constancy of the tradition. By the same token, this constancy of tradition is driven by the dynamics of alternation and re-deployment, even allowing space for fresh development and innovation.

If we liken hymns to a solar system of many planets in regular orbit, each with their own satellites, and then some asteroids and comets making rarer appearances, we can understand how the trusted instinct for hymns works. But if we isolate one heavenly body from the rest, we fail to notice the Milky Way. A favourite or useful hymn on its own, seen apart from its setting, may just be a borrowed light. Thus, even when it has merited a place in Catholic imagination, it still cannot be claimed that hymnody as a whole has been integrated within Catholic worship in English in the way it is second nature to Anglicans and as the Proper has been in the Roman rite.

But hymns at Mass are here to stay. The challenge to integrating them appropriately, however, comes not from the Roman Proper but a relatively new phenomenon that adds yet another claim to represent the identity of Catholic worship: the "liturgical song". Its evolution both discards the classic chants (whether in Latin and in English translation) and is suspicious of hymnody. Cultivated in the three most popular Catholic hymnbooks (see also the influential American collections from GIA, *Worship* and *Gather*), liturgical songs have been developed to be expressly different from English strophic hymns. Their refrains are held to be easier for people to remember as they participate in the liturgical action. But it is difficult to discern which part of the received Roman tradition they have come from and why they are presented as distinctively Catholic. One view is that they mirror Christian antiquity's custom of singing refrains to processional psalms or religious poetry, the great exponent of which was St Ephrem, "Harp of the Spirit" and

author of *Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands.* Thus they reflect the use of *troparia* in the Byzantine rite.

With such a pedigree, these newly invented forms of chant are seen as "some other suitable song" *par excellence,* to serve in place of the Introit, Offertory and Communion. Composers identify chants at these points as Processions – a "gathering song" as ministers come to the altar; a song as the people bring the gifts to the altar; and a song for people to join in as they make their way to receive Holy Communion. Hymns are held to be unsuited to these actions. The offertory rite is not, however, a procession of the people, but the functional transfer of the gifts to the altar and their preparation by the deacon and priest. However rich the symbolism and ceremony in the Byzantine and Sarum rites, the true significance of this rite is not the "offering" of the people, but the gifts' acceptance and readiness for the sacrifice. And in reality there is no Communion procession. For practical purposes, of course we need to come from our places to receive Holy Communion. But the whole dynamic of the liturgy at this point is that we are already at the altar, with hearts lifted to the Lord as we stand in his presence and serve him in the worship of heaven. It is not we who process up and take Communion: it is the Bridegroom who comes out to give himself.

Experience from Anglican custom at these moments is, however, that strophic hymns can be ideally suited. One thinks especially of *Alleluia, sing to Jesus,* or *O thou, who at thy Eucharist didst pray* at the Offertory; and the great Communion hymns like *And now, O Father, mindful of thy love* (based on the Canon of the Mass), or *Glory be to Jesus* and *Just, as I am, without one plea.* Anglicans (and Methodists!) readily recall their hymns at worship and the great mainstays easily accompany the preparation of the gifts and queuing to receive the Eucharist. And, if it is a matter of needing to remember a refrain, especially when a hymn is long and difficult to memorise (although this should not be overdone, lest effect and popularity pall), there are plenty of examples from English hymnody – *Just, as I am; Ye who own the faith of Jesus; For the beauty of the earth; All glory, laud and honour; Jesus lives! Thy terrors now* … For that matter, Catholics already have *Come to the manger; God of mercy and compassion* and *Hail, Redeemer, King Divine,* splendours that deserve to be admired beyond the Roman Catholic world.

Without doubt some of the worship songs are of quality and strength. Stephen Dean's *Holy gifts for holy people* and Bernadette Farrell's *Praise to you, O Christ our Saviour* offer clear examples of enrichment to the developing tradition, just as the occasional motets, arias and hymns have done in the past.

Others require more than congregational resources to be sung effectively (e.g. instruments and practised singers for the verses) and so their roots in people's worshipping are that much more tentative. This may be one reason why the appeal of the responsorial format can wane with time. After all, the psalm verses in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy to which *troparia* relate (e.g. the Trisagion and Psalm 79/80, and the Cherubic Hymn and Psalm 23/24) have long been dropped for the most part, doubtless because of the need to abbreviate ever more enriched services and because the refrains themselves survived through sheer familiarity (the same tendency is to be found with the Roman Propers, whose lost psalm verses are only now being restored). For similar reasons, just like some of the once cherished Victorian hymns, a number of good, and currently popular, processional verse-refrain songs will not last (perhaps even Daniel Schutte's *Here I am, Lord* and *Christ be our light* by Bernadette Farrell. It would be interesting to know how much Sydney Carter's *Lord of the Dance* is sung nowadays). Arguably, they are not meant to serve more than the present generations in the liturgy of the people of God, and indeed some early favourites now feel dated.

The same is true of some choruses and worship songs, usually borrowed from Protestant traditions. While there are those that evoke deep reverence and high praise (some Taizé and Iona chants stand out; as do some characteristic pieces from the *Mission Praise* and the Pentecostal corners of the Church, like Dave Evans' *Be still, for the Spirit of the Lord* and several songs by Graham Kendrick), others have proved truly inadequate, unequal either in quality or execution to the dance and light music they emulate. Yet a good hymn, as Archbishop Rowan Williams remarked to the International Hymn Conference at York in 1997 (see the *Hymn Society Bulletin* 213, October 1997), "sustains an imaginative process", "taking time to allow images to unfold". He distinguished this "measured movement" in exposition from a worship song or chorus, which is meant "to be rhapsodic, to create a mood, rather than a set of perceptions". On the other hand, a chorus "need not develop anything":

> it doesn't really matter how often you sing a chorus, whereas a congregation singing *O sacred head, sore wounded* three times in succession would be a bizarre phenomenon. Because you are taken through a process, you can't intelligently or intelligibly start it again immediately. The chorus does not work to the same obligations. This is why I don't want to enter into the fashionable game of being rude about choruses in order to make greater claims for classical hymnody.

> You're not comparing like with like. I would only say that there is a problem when the chorus has almost completely displaced the hymn; and I think this is an increasingly grave problem in British Evangelical piety and is fast becoming a problem for popular Roman Catholic devotion. If there is nothing that systematically sets out to extend your imagination and to allow you to perceive, to think and to feel yourself in new ways in relation to the central narrative of faith, then your Christian self-understanding is massively undermined. Mood cannot be everything.

This is of relevance, too, to the burden currently placed on liturgical songs. While some of the better examples, like the classic hymns, aptly complement the Proper of the Roman rite, we ought not to have got ourselves into a position where either format has almost entirely displaced the texts and music proper to the tradition. Furthermore, if liturgical songs do not prove to be enduring, as an attempt to create something indigenously Catholic to keep the "foreign" hymn away from the Roman rite, we have lost several generations-worth of formation in musical liturgy in the vernacular. This is what the classic hymn tradition, not as a substitute but as a complement, can provide. There is little justice to the claim that English hymnody has been part of a century-long effort on the part of fine Catholic musicians and liturgists to make the Roman rite Protestant. Good Christian music for worship is good Christian music for worship; and we can all benefit from each other's gifts, when we make use of them as appropriate to our requirements and with respect to their own integrity.

Towards Integration

Anglicans often describe the way in which they worship as the "beauty of holiness", offered "decently and in order". Their hymn singing is inseparable from these concepts. But for some time we Catholics have missed a trick in not working out the basis on which we make use of their tradition of doxology – doctrine as well as worship – alongside our own Proper. As Edward Schaefer, in *Catholic Music through the Ages* (Hillenbrand Books, Chicago 2008, p. 193), observes, the way we use them "tends to inculcate the ideology of singing things at Mass rather than actually singing the Mass". Some of the collections published to resource the revised rite in English either missed the moment for forming an appropriately Catholic liturgical culture (e.g. *Sing the Mass,* published far too late in 1975), or they were too high brow (like the *New Catholic Hymnal* of 1971, which did not relate its hymns to the Proper,

as it attempted a separate Catholic take on hymnody, even to devising dissimilar wordings to familiar Protestant and Anglican pieces). In contrast, the more popular collections presented a collection of tastes with something for everyone, but reflecting late twentieth century musical culture so as to maximise the attraction of "joining in". Yet again, neither the traditional hymns nor the new songs related to the Proper chant texts. There is very little Gregorian chant either. Purists felt that plainsong belonged exclusively to the Latin language and there was a general sense that, since the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council, it belonged to the past and stood in the way of "active participation".

What an irony that the phrase used by Pius X to promote the singing of Gregorian chant was turned against it. When I was ordained in the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Victor Guazzelli, urged by Cardinal Hume's interest in the contribution that former Anglicans might bring in to the Catholic community, asked me what my impressions were. I observed that for two years the monks of Silos had been dominating the classical charts with the best-selling collection of Gregorian chant ever released. People were deriving serenity and inspiration from *Canto Gregoriano* as they drove, did their ironing, soaked in the bath, read, painted, or even said their prayers. Yet, by and large, the place you would be least likely to hear such music was a Catholic church on a Sunday. My meaning was that this music, set inseparably to the words of the Bible and the Catholic liturgy, has a deep resonance with people and, therefore, as a means of announcing the Gospel and helping people to pray, its great potential lay unrealised. "Oh, we have come a long way since all that," said the bishop. Perhaps there was a feeling that too much prescription of forms of music to be used at Mass would obstruct the people from joining in. Perhaps there was a calculation that losing Gregorian chant for the sake of internalising the revised rite was a price worth paying.

But it need not have been so. The needs of Anglican religious communities (notably the women's Community of St Mary the Virgin at Wantage and the men's Society of St John the Evangelist at Cowley, Oxford) for a great deal more seasonal and festal fare than hymns can provide led to the adaptation of the (mostly) Sarum Proper chants to the English of Coverdale's psalter and the Authorised Version of the Bible. Simpler versions were developed for parishes with more modest resources too. In both cases they co-existed with the judicious use of hymns. To this day in the US Pastoral Provision's Anglican Use, settings of the plainsong melodies to "old English" translations of the pre-Conciliar mass are in use (see *The American Gradual,* ed. Bruce Ford, 2nd

edition, Hopkinsville KY, 2008, inspired by G. H. Palmer's and Francis Burgess' *Plainchant Gradual* for Wantage providing both the Sarum and Roman chants set to English. There are also Extraordinary Rite settings in contemporary English by Paul Arbogast. All these resources are online). There are also English versions of the current *Graduale Romanum* texts, set to simplified melodies or psalm tones (see *The Anglican Use Gradual,* ed. David Burt, Partridge Hill Press, Mansfield MA, 2006, inspired by Francis Burgess' once widely used *English Gradual* and using traditional English; see also the contemporary language settings of Columba Kelly OSB and Samuel Weber OSB mentioned above. Again, they are all online). But, whether they use current or non-contemporary English, these ready-made, and perfectly flexible, resources have been disregarded by Catholic musicians and liturgists in general. Sadly too, Anglo-Catholics in this country have dropped their distinctive take on the "Western rite" – the Roman Proper plus English hymnody – as they have conformed to the current Roman Catholic model of "some other suitable song".

Yet if an appreciation for the Proper, whether in English or Latin, can be recovered, it can help us to know better how to use the permission for alternatives that we are now accustomed to. And when Anglican groups begin to be received into their own ordinariates, and a common liturgical patrimony among them is identified, there will be a momentous opportunity for the Catholic Church to re-assess its attitude to a great musical culture from another tradition, receive it and make it her own. Within this, the English hymn tradition is not just coming as a custom or an adornment: it comes as a distinctive elaboration of the Latin Roman liturgical tradition, adding riches and not detracting from it in any way. When Mgr Graham Leonard, the retired bishop of London, was asked if he missed anything in the Church of England after he became a Catholic, he replied, "Only the hymns". Dr Leonard was perhaps saying more than he realised. Because the sung Proper is not widely used in practice, and there are so far no agreed criteria for employing complementary or alternative chants, something feels as though it is missing. But we can learn from the way hymns are used as a form of Proper in the Anglican tradition, and specifically Anglicans' experience of modifying and integrating that system with the Roman Proper in translation.

By the same token, hymnody as part of an Anglican patrimony in the Catholic Church will not stand still. In contact and communion it will develop too. We have noted how Anglican religious communities and other churches, exposed to Catholic influences, used translations of the Roman and

Sarum Propers. So from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries Latin Christianity's Proper has already obliquely affected how Anglicans used hymns at the Eucharist. When I was growing up in the Church of England (which had widely undergone its own liturgical movement), hymns were integral to the Parish Communion as the central weekly act of worship. We had a processional hymn for the Introit; between the epistle and gospel there was a hymn as the Gradual (a metrical psalm, or a hymn, like a sequence, that reflected the story of the feast or the Gospel reading); then a large Offertory hymn, two hymns at Holy Communion and a great purposeful hymn for going out after the blessing. We did not have a psalm at the Gradual, because we sang psalms at great length at Evensong (to Anglican Chant, which is founded originally on Gregorian chant). The hymns were carefully selected – varying lengths, different metres, strong hymns for processing in and for being sent out, solid Christology at the Offertory as the consecration approached, hymns cultivating interior devotion during Communion.

In Bishop Andrew Burnham's book he reflects on how time and openness to the liturgical reforms have revealed to Anglicans that their earlier heavy reliance on hymns was a tradition that needed developing. He wants the Roman tradition's Proper restored, especially the psalm chants between the readings, and he wants the recessional hymn after the dismissal to be abandoned as inappropriate. László Dobszay is less severe. He notes that there is a custom in the Roman rite, sanctioned by Pius X, of adding a motet to the Offertory chant and other choral music at Communion. In the vernacular celebration – as well as at a Latin Mass, provided the Proper's integrity is respected – it is therefore legitimate to use strophic hymns at these points according to the people's culture and musical traditions. In German-speaking Europe, there was a tradition of the *Singmesse,* a "high" Low Mass at which chorales were sung (mostly versifications of the Ordinary of the Mass like Schubert's German *Sanctus;* but also seasonal and devotional hymns). There is a similar tradition in Hungary and a book of vernacular hymns for singing at Mass was published in France in 1947, long before the liturgical revisions after Vatican II. So what follows is a proposal for how hymns can find an appropriate place in the Roman eucharistic rite, in line with tradition and principle, seen through the prism of the Anglican use. A superb example of what can be achieved with respect both to the Roman proper and the English hymn tradition is the magnificent celebration of mass by the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI at Cofton Park, Rednal, to beatify Cardinal Newman. Not all the suggestions need be followed all the time. The aim will be not be more

burdens and duplications, but to balance two valuable traditions and enable them to enrich and reflect each other within the overall integrity of the mass, towards the sanctification of the people of God and their liturgical service to the glory of his name.

In the Eucharistic worship of Roman Catholics belonging to the Anglican liturgical tradition, there could be an Entrance hymn for a procession, followed by the Proper Introit for the day, sung simply and straightforwardly to simple psalm tones, or one of the standard model Gregorian melodies that often recur in the Antiphonals. Singers in the choir can also be inspired and trained to sing the music of the ancient Gradual, either in Latin or in the existing English adaptations. And particular attention should be paid to the work of Christoph Tietze, Director of Music at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption in San Francisco, whose remarkable and scholarly achievement is to have put into English hymn-form all the Proper Introit antiphon and psalm verses for Sundays and Solemnities (see *Introit Hymns for the Church Year,* Christoph Tietze, World Library Publications, 2005). The custom of singing a hymn and stopping it short once the priest has arrived at his place is not to be tolerated. It destroys the theological and poetic structure of the hymn, but also gives the impression that the sole task of the Introit is as a "Gathering Song", to be given up once the congregation has been assembled. But just as the Proper Introit ought not to be curtailed, neither should a carefully selected hymn, whether preceding, following or replacing it. It has become, like the Latin proper to which it relates, an integral part of the celebration and is not to be considered an "add on". Half the Introit Hymn's role is to be sung during the procession of the clergy to the sanctuary. The other half is to "foster the unity of those who have been gathered", according to the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal,* 47. This can hardly be achieved if the hymn, or "Entrance Chant", or "Gathering Song", is disrupted. This is a liturgical moment for dwelling on the consolidation of the Eucharistic body towards its communion.

In the Mass of the Latin rite Church, rhythmic verses sung between the Epistle and Gospel once abounded, as well as some non-metrical proses. Only those for Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi and *Stabat Mater* remain. Based on couplets sung to changing melodies, most, although not all, differed in form from the later English strophic hymn. But a number of hymns familiar in English are translations of sequences: from the anonymous medieval *Ave Maris Stella* (*Star of sea and ocean* as translated by the Roman Catholic Edward Caswall, or *Hail, O star that pointest,* as translated by the Anglican Athelstan

Riley) to *Adeste Fideles,* translated by Frederick Oakley as *O come, all ye faithful.* So it is not true, after all, to say that hymns are foreign to the Roman mass. It would seem to be a worthy restoration from within the tradition of the Latin rite to recover the singing of a hymn or sequence with the Alleluia after the Epistle, at least for certain seasons, feasts and great occasions.

Where there is time, just as a choir motet may be sung after the Offertory, so too a hymn of some substance can be taken up, provided the Proper chant and psalm verses are restored, even if sung simply. At Holy Communion, again provided that the given chant and psalm verses are sung, there is ample time for a Communion hymn, especially when Holy Communion is given in both kinds, a sacred Anglican principle. Edward Schaefer (p. 195f.) suggests that this is a good point at which to make use of the hymns of the *Liber Hymnarius,* and notwithstanding his praise for the translations collected by Matthew Britt OSB (*Hymns of the Breviary and Missal,* Benziger, New York, 1924), the Anglican patrimony of translations, especially those of John Mason Neale, is surely unrivalled. And although – even, strictly speaking, in the Anglican rite – the service ends with the Blessing and Dismissal, there is scope for a final processional hymn on special occasions. In some Roman Catholic parishes there is a custom of singing an anthem to the Blessed Virgin Mary immediately after Mass. As a rule, this can be imitated in Anglican Ordinariate churches with a metrical Marian hymn, or a processional hymn to mark a significant mystery or celebration.

Thus the principles and instincts with which Ordinariate parishes make use of their patrimony of hymnody can serve as an example to other Roman Catholic parishes of how to make use of the tradition too: not as a series of arbitrary choices, but as a coherent, systematic whole that can be deployed with discernment, to reflect the liturgy of the day and as a means towards "active participation". So neither hymns nor other liturgical songs need obscure the Proper, but form its rich complement if used with discrimination. By the same token, Anglo-Catholic parishes have become exposed to the same influences as Roman Catholic parishes. Thus hymns have made space for responsorial psalms, the choruses and liturgical songs. *Celebration Hymnal, Hymns Old and New, Mission Praise* and *Songs of Fellowship* supplement the traditional books. It is therefore a tradition that can adapt and develop when needed. But these influences, mostly from contemporary Roman Catholicism and the Charismatic Renewal, if applied *ad libitum* and without the right criteria, can have the unintended effect of weakening the integrity of the hymn tradition as a "Proper" body of liturgical culture, as much as they have had in

Roman Catholic worship and the use of its Proper. Perhaps in the coming into communion of the two traditions – these two approaches to what a Proper is – there can be a synergy that enriches and restores them as they bring out the best in each other.

Building up the Body: – Unity in Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God

Back in 1997 Archbishop Rowan Williams put his finger on why Anglicans love hymns and, we can surmise, what Catholics may be missing out on by not realising their design and purpose. Hymns form experience, making people imagine and think differently and also instilling a physical discipline (active participation?):

> The physicality of singing is as much a part of the work of hymnody as the content … The good hymn makes you breathe in a certain way …[and] obliges a particular kind of attention to the physicality of others. It is the most dramatic and obvious instance, in most church-goers' experience, of corporate action … The classical chorale and the primitive psalm tune (Bourgeois, Ravenscroft and so on) are calculated physical achievements, not only melodic exercises. They are, dare I say, the sound of communion.
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> A fair amount of contemporary composition, by allowing looser melodic development and more episodic harmonisation, loses much of this… Just like the "thinner" doctrinal language and imagery of many modern compositions, the "thinner" melody and harmony reduce the range of what the hymn opens up, narrow the horizon. In all these and other way, there is a risk of making the hymn less of an ecclesial experience.
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> …The performance of a hymn is a focal and … profoundly accessible aspect of the process of … *sentire cum ecclesia,* thinking or feeling with the Church… it is a matter of finding your way into a new but inhabited world, a large landscape moulded by the action of God in Scriptural history and peopled with those who have allowed that action to reconstitute the ways in which they think and speak of themselves and their environment … We lack a religious language that changes how we think and speak (and so changes what we think we can be and do)… Any discussion of the aesthetics of hymnody, of what counts as quality, has to look hard at what we expect hymns to do as ecclesial actions.

So hymns are not just a liturgical culture, a denominational tradition, nor a historic patrimony. They are intrinsically concerned with membership in the Body of Christ. Archbishop Rowan reflects what Pope Benedict wrote in his 1986 essay on *Liturgy and Sacred Music:*

> The music that corresponds to the liturgy of the incarnate Christ raised up on the Cross lives from a … synthesis of spirit, intuition and sensuous sound … The music of faith seeks the integration of man in the sursum corda; man, however, does not find this integration in himself, but only in self-transcendence toward the incarnate Word. Sacred music, which stands in the structure of this movement, thus becomes the purification and the ascent of man … This music is not the work of a moment, but participation in history. It is not realised by an individual but only in community. Thus it is precisely in [music] that the entrance of faith into history and the community of all members of the Body of Christ expresses itself.

Because hymns, to English Christians of the Anglican tradition, are the sound of communion so much more than a means of their "joining in", they resonate with the understanding of Catholics about what it is to live and belong in the Church of Christ. They are one reason why the Catholic Church speaks of a mutual exchange of gifts with the Church of England. They are also an example of why the proposed Ordinariates are not mere nature reserves for a vanishing culture – there is no dynamism or forward mission to this. Instead they are a means for the Catholic Church at large to receive the great gifts that the Anglican Communion has to offer, make them her own, and benefit from them on the road to the perfect revelation of visible unity among all the believers together in Christ's Universal Church. It may even be that within the Catholic Church this tradition is conserved and developed. The sound of communion that Anglicans hear as they sing their hymns in the Body of Christ is none other than the Word of God, who says, "Father, may they be one as you and I are one, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me".

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