

# *Mass*

1. a. Public celebration of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church and some Protestant churches. b. The sacrament of the Eucharist.
2. A musical setting of certain parts of the Mass, especially the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei.

**Ordinary** = Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei

**Proper** = The parts of the Mass whose parts change daily, as distinct from the ordinary. The proper consists of the introit, Gradual, Alleluia or Tract, Offertory, and Communion. [Middle English *masse*, from Old English *mæsse*, from Vulgar Latin \**messa*, from Late Latin *missa*, from Latin, feminine past participle of *mittere*, to send away, dismiss.]

## *Sacred Music of the Reformation*

### Protestant Reformation

- Whole congregation participates
- Simple so that words are clear
- Vernacular
- German Mass (Lutheran)
- "Chorals"
  - originally consisting of only two elements, a text and a tune; much of Lutheran music an outgrowth of chorales
- Psalters
  - rhymed metrical translations of the Book of Psalms, set to melodies either newly composed or of popular origins
  - the principal musical production in Reformed churches
- Anthems
  - corresponds to the Latin motet in Anglican services
  
- Kyrie, German Mass 1526 Martin Luther #1
- Ein feste burg ist unser Gott, Martin Luther #8
- Erhalt un, Herr, bei deinem Wort, Martin Luther #9

### Catholic Reformation

- simplification of counterpoint, clarity of text, more frequent use of homophony
- Gloria, Missa Papae Marcelli by Palestrina (1525-1594), Prince of Music #2
- Dum complerentur by Palestrina (1525-1594), Prince of Music #9
- 

### Forty Voices

- Ecce beatam lucem by Alessandro Striggio, Utopia Triumphans #7
- Spem in alium by Thomas Tallis, Utopia Triumphans #1

# *Gregorian Chant*

Early Christians derived their music from Jewish and Byzantine religious chant. Like all music in the Western world up to this time, Christian plainchant was *monophonic*: that is, comprised of a single melody without any harmonic support or accompaniment. The many hundreds of melodies are defined by one of the eight Greek *modes*, some of which sound very different than the major/minor scales our ears are used to today. The melodies are free and seem to wander, dictated by the Latin liturgical texts to which they are set. As these chants spread throughout Europe, they were embellished and developed along many different lines in various regions. It was believed that **Pope Gregory I (reigned 590-604)** codified them during the sixth-century, establishing uniform usage throughout the Western Church. Although his actual contribution to this enormous body of music remains unknown, his name has been applied to this music, and it is known as *Gregorian Chant*.

Gregorian chant remains among the most spiritually moving and profound music in western culture. An idea of its pure, floating melody can be heard in the Easter hymn, *Victimae paschali laudes*.

Many years later, composers of Renaissance [polyphony](#) very often used plainchant melodies as the basis for their sacred works

## *The Role of the Catholic Mass*

In the Roman Catholic Church, except for the altogether distinct Ambrosian rite (see Ambrose, Saint) and for some variant forms among religious orders, especially that of the Dominicans, the service is the same everywhere, under regulation of the Holy See. The language of the liturgy is typically terse. The celebrant, who must be a priest, follows a prescribed missal and wears certain vestments. Mass is said at an altar containing relics; two candles must be burning. A congregation is not essential, but solitary Mass is discouraged. A High (solemn) Mass requires a priest, deacon, and choir. Low Mass, much more common, is the same service said by one priest. Normally at Low Mass a server or acolyte, traditionally called an altar boy but now often a girl, helps the celebrant. Most of the text is invariable, or “ordinary,” but certain parts, called “proper,” change with the occasion or day. Mass may be offered with a special intention, as in thanksgiving or for peace. A requiem is a proper Mass for the dead. Most priests say Mass daily. Sunday Mass is an important sociocultural factor in Roman Catholic life. All members are required to attend Mass on Sunday as a minimum participation in public worship.

## *Medieval Solemn Mass*

Sung (* indicates Proper chant)	Chanted	Spoken prayers/Ceremonies
*Introit Kyrie Gloria		Prayers of preparation (priest) Incensing of the altar
*Gradual *Alleluia [or Tract] *[Sequence]	Collect (priest) Epistle (subdeacon)	
Credo *Offertory	Gospel (deacon)	Priest's blessing of the deacon who will chant the Gospel
Sanctus – Benedictus	Preface (priest)	Offertory prayers Blessing of incense Incensing of the altar Washing of hands Additional prayers Secret
Agnus Dei	Lord's Prayer (priest)	Canon (priest): consecration of bread and wine
*Communion		Spoken prayers (priest)
Deo gratias	Postcommunion (priest) Ite missa est (deacon)	Additional prayers (priest) [Reception of Communion] Prayers of thanksgiving

*Mass – A Theater Piece for Singers, Players and Dancers*  
*Leonard Bernstein, 1971*

Commissioned by Jacqueline Kennedy in memory of the late John F. Kennedy

**Disc 1**

1. Antiphon: Kyrie eleison
2. Hymn and Psalm: "A Simple Song"
3. Responsory: Alleluia
4. Prefatory Prayers
5. Thrice-Triple Canon: Dominus vobiscum
6. In nomine Patris
7. Prayer for the Congregation (Chorale: "Almighty Father")
8. Epiphany
9. Confiteor
10. Trope: "I Don't Know"
11. Trope: "Easy"
12. Meditation no. 1
13. Gloria tibi
14. Gloria in excelsis
15. Trope: "Half of the People"
16. Trope: "Thank You"
17. Meditation no. 2
18. "The Word of the Lord"
19. "God Said"

**Disc 2**

1. Credo in unum Deum
2. Trope: "Non Credo"
3. Trope: "Hurry"
4. Trope: "World Without End"
5. Trope: "I Believe in God"
6. Meditation no. 3: De profundis, part 1
7. De profundis, part 2
8. "Our Father..."
9. Trope: "I Go On"
10. "Holy! Holy! Holy!..."
11. "Agnus Dei..."
12. "Things Get Broken"
13. "Secret Songs"

# *The Uneven History of Church Music*

The crisis in liturgical music is not unprecedented; the Church has overcome many previous problems

*By Arlene Oost-Zinner and Jeffrey Tucker*

Apr 2003 (CWR) - There is no shortage of people ready to bemoan the tired state of music in the Church today. And the reasons for the complaints are clear. Too many liturgies are dominated by the standard fare that first became popular in the 1970s, which can inspire torpor and even despair.

But one mistake that critics might make stems from thinking that our present confusion over music is unprecedented, or that it cannot be remedied. There have been many periods throughout Catholic history when liturgical music drifted far from its roots. But with urging from popes, guidance from bishops, and enthusiastic cooperation from musicians and the people themselves, many bad situations have been corrected and clarity has been restored.

The first documented case of trouble comes from the 1st century, when Pope St. Clement discovered that church musicians were singing psalms from the Christian liturgy at pagan festivals, probably for a profit. The Pope intervened with a letter that forbid the practice, for fear that Christian musicians would appear as "wandering minstrels, singers tellers of tales of high adventure, who perform their art for a mouthful of bread."

In the 4th century, St. Augustine himself complained that sometimes music in church seems "directed to the sound rather than the sense" of the faith, in which case he "would prefer to hear no singing at all."

Five centuries later, Pope Leo IV discovered that just 26 miles from Rome, one of the most important monasteries in all of Italy had been completely neglecting the Gregorian chant for years. The abbot, the Pope had heard, found the whole genre "distasteful." Leo IV upbraided the abbot for this opinion:

We command under sentence of excommunication that, in the singing and readings in your churches, you carry them out in no other way than that which Pope St. Gregory handed down, and We hold that you cultivate and sing this tradition always&

The eventual advent of polyphonic singing presented a new problem: singers who use the liturgy to improvise their own songs during Mass. In the 12th century, the Bishop of Chartres complained that much singing in church is "full of ostentation." "Such is the facility of running up and down the scale," he wrote, "the ears lose their power of judging."

In the same period St. Aelred, a Cistercian abbot in England, described in detail the alarming developments of the period. "To what purpose is that terrible blowing of bellows, imitating rather the crash of thunder than the sweetness of the human voice?" he asked. The saintly abbot continued: "Sometimes, and I write it with shame" the singing "is forced into the whinnying of a horse" and even "imitates the agonies of the dying." "And this ridiculous trifling," he said with disgust, "is called religion."

#### THE 14TH-CENTURY CORRECTION

In the early 14th century, Pope Clement the V noted that "many ministers of the Church," in addition to neglecting their prayers in favoring of sports like falconing and fox hunting, "do not fear to dance licentiously in the church cemeteries, and at times& sing silly songs." To correct the problem, he decreed that the liturgy should be "devoutly chanted" in all Cathedrals and churches.

One author from the mid 14th century (Jacob of Leige) complained that Catholic singers "contrive to sing a little in the modern matter" but have no regard for quality; they sing too lasciviously, they multiply voices superfluously breaking, cutting, and dividing their voices into too many consonants; in the most inopportune place they dance, whirl, and jump about on notes, howling like dogs. They bay and like madmen nourished by disorderly and twisted aberrations and use a harmony alien to nature herself.

Pope John XXII, ruling from Avignon, put a stop to all this with his encyclical *Docta Sanctorum Patrum*. He criticized composers who know "nothing of the true foundation upon which they must build& the mere number of the notes, in these compositions, conceal from us the plain-chant melody, with its simple, well-regulated rises and falls. These musicians run without pausing, they intoxicate the ear without satisfying it, they dramatize the text with gestures and, instead of promoting devotion, they prevent it." Pope John said that new music was fine, so long as it kept within the framework of Catholic tradition, but he legislated "to prohibit, cast out, and banish" music that departed too far from the purity of the chant.

During the period of the Reformation, the Bishop of Vienne, France, wrote to Pope Paul III to say that the Catholics needed to improve their music for fear of losing too many people to the Protestant sects. He said that many Catholic musicians "do not even know one note from another" and are generally "unskilled." They "permit themselves to roar than to sing in the choir" and "permit in the churches songs and organ music which arouse wantonness rather than piety." In response, the Council of Trent encouraged music that draws listeners to the "desire of heavenly harmonies, in the contemplation of the joys of the blessed."

## POPE PIUS X INTERVENES

Similar problems were encountered again in the 17th and 18th centuries, and, by the 19th century, much of the chant and polyphonic repertoire was lost and displaced by popular music and the symphonic treatments by famous composers. It took the 20th century Pope Pius X to intervene and rescue the tradition--writing more encyclicals on music than all previous popes put together. Though it took Herculean efforts, he brought about a revival of chant and the music written in the tradition of chant.

A final attempt to repair the problem came with the Second Vatican Council, which decreed that that Gregorian chant is "specially suited to the Roman liturgy; therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services." Worried about the loss of tradition, Pope Paul VI issued a book of simple chants for parishes that he hoped (in vain) would enter into widespread use.

In all but the most recent attempts, the efforts by the popes and saints managed to bring about a revival of sacred music. But it was not only the legislation that wrought the change; the most powerful case for great Catholic music comes from the listeners.

The bulk of post-conciliar music is based on popular and commercial successes. People hang on to these newer compositions, not because they are musically sound or in some way integral to the faith, but because their sound is something familiar, and, through repetition, easily accessible. These works are not based on anything in Catholic tradition, but rather, on rhythms and melodies coming from the secular world.

Chant and polyphony, on the other hand, are the Catholic tradition, and upon being reintroduced to the ears and hearts of the people, will once again begin to sound familiar and welcome. It is precisely because it is not played or heard that the beautiful sound of chant and its polyphonic offspring are unfamiliar to Catholic congregations, and this lack of familiarity is what impedes its acceptance. With a minimum of exposure, ordinary parishioners would come quickly to accept chant. Truly sacred music is spiritually compelling from the first note.

All who complain about the present state of Catholic music: lift up your hearts! The beauty will return, if only we have will and desire to bring it back to the ears of the faithful, parish by parish.

[AUTHOR ID] Arlene Oost-Zinner and Jeffrey Tucker are respectively the president and director of the St. Cecilia Schola Cantorum in Auburn, Alabama, which has recorded two CDs of chant and polyphony. They would like to thank Thomas Day for his comments.

<b>Mass under the papacy</b>	<b>Formula Missae, 1523</b>	<b>Deutsche Messe, 1526</b>
Confiteor	(Prayers to Saints, the Virgin - Deleted)	(Prayers to Saints, the Virgin - Deleted)
Introit	Introit	Hymn or German Psalm
Kyrie (9-fold)	Kyrie ( 9-fold )	Kyrie (3-fold)
Gloria in Excelsis	Gloria in Excelsis	Collect
Salutation and Collect	Collect	Epistle
Epistle	Epistle	German Hymn
Gradual/Alleluia	Gradual/Alleluia	Gospel
Gospel with acclamation	Gospel	Creed (Sung in German)
Homily (optional)	Nicene Creed (Sung in Latin)	Sermon
Nicene Creed	Sermon	The Lord's Prayer
Offertory and the secret	Preparation of Elements	Admonition to Communicants
Preface	Preface	Words of Institution
Salutation; sursum corda	Words of Institution	Distribution of Elements
Sanctus	Sanctus	Hymns during Communion (German Sanctus, Agnus Dei)
Canon (Eucharistic Prayers)	The Lord's Prayer	Collect
Benedictus	Agnus Dei	Aaronic Benediction
Agnus Dei	Communion distribution	
Communion antiphon	Post-Communion	
Communion distribution	Collect	
Post-Communion	Benedicamus	
Salutation/Benedicamus/Benediction	Aaronic Benediction	

This chart indicates which Psalms are recited during each Hour of the Divine Office, the prayer of the Church that sanctifies the hours of the day after the practice from Old Testament times: "Seven times a day I have given praise to thee, for the judgments of thy justice" (Psalm 118:164/DR). Thus, we have Matins/Lauds (midnight/before dawn), Prime (dawn), Terce (mid morning), Sext (midday), None (mid afternoon), Vespers (dusk), and Compline (after sunset).

In 1911, Pope St. Pius X provided that the 150 psalms of the Psalter be distributed among the different day and night hours in such a way that it was possible to recite the whole Psalter in the course of a week. Although the Most Holy Rosary and other private devotions are most commendable, it is the Divine Office, which includes Holy Mass, that is the Church's official and most highly indulgenced prayer. It would be a most commendable spiritual practice for those who are unable to say the entire Divine Office at least to say all, or even some, of the Psalms pertaining to each day.

DAILY INVITATORY: 94.

#### SUNDAY

Matins: I. 1, 2, 3. II. 8, 9(1), 9(2). III. 9(3), 9(4), 10.

Lauds: 92, 99, 62, 148.

Prime: 117, 118(1), 118(2).

Terce: 118(3), 118(4), 118(5).

Sext: 118(6), 118(7), 118(8).

None: 118(9), 118(10), 118(11).

Vespers: 109, 110, 111, 112, 113.

Compline: 4, 90, 133.

#### MONDAY

Matins: I. 13, 14, 16. II. 17(1), 17(2), 17(3). III. 19, 20, 29.

Lauds: 46, 5, 28, 116.

Prime: 23, 18(1), 18(2).

Terce: 26(1), 26(2), 27.

Sext: 30(1), 30(2), 30(3).

None: 31, 32(1), 32(2).

Vespers: 114, 115, 119, 120, 121.

Compline: 6, 7(1), 7(2).

#### TUESDAY

Matins: I. 34(1), 34(2), 34(3). II. 36(1), 36(2), 36(3). III. 37(1), 37(2), 38.

Lauds: 95, 42, 66, 134.

Prime: 24(1), 24(2), 24(3).

Terce: 39(1), 39(2), 39(3).

Sext: 40, 41(1), 41(2).

None: 43(1), 43(2), 43(3).

Vespers: 122, 123, 124, 125, 126.

Compline: 11, 12, 15.

### WEDNESDAY

Matins: I. 44(1), 44(2), 45. II. 47, 48(1), 48(2). III. 49(1), 9(2), 50.

Lauds: 96, 64, 100, 145.

Prime: 25, 51, 52.

Terce: 53, 54(1), 54(2).

Sext: 55, 56, 57.

None: 58(1), 58(2), 59.

Vespers: 127, 128, 129, 130, 131.

Compline: 33(1), 33(2), 60.

### THURSDAY

Matins: I. 61, 65(1), 65(2). II. 67(1), 67(2), 67(3). III. 68(1), 68(2), 68(3).

Lauds: 97, 89, 35, 146.

Prime: 22, 71(1), 71(2).

Terce: 72(1), 72(2), 72(3).

Sext: 73(1), 73(2), 73(3).

None: 74, 75(1), 75(2).

Vespers: 132, 135(1), 135(2), 136, 137.

Compline: 69, 70(1), 70(2).

### FRIDAY

Matins: I. 77(1), 77(2), 77(3). II. 77(4), 77(4), 77(5). III. 78, 80, 82.

Lauds: 98, 142, 84, 147.

Prime: 21(1), 21(2), 21(3).

Terce: 79(1), 79(2), 81.

Sext: 83(1), 83(2), 86.

None: 88(1), 88(2), 88(3).

Vespers: 138(1), 138(2), 139, 140, 141.

Compline: 76(1), 76(2), 85.

### SATURDAY

Matins: I. 104(1), 104(2), 104(3). II. 105(1), 105(2), 105(3). III. 106(1), 106(2), 106(3).

Lauds: 149, 91, 63, 150.

Prime: 93(1), 93(2), 107.

Terce: 101(1), 101(2), 101(3).

Sext: 103(1), 103(2), 103(3).

None: 108(1), 108(2), 108(3).

Vespers: 143(1), 143(2), 144(1), 144(2), 144(3).

Compline: 87, 102(1), 102(2).

# *The Hidden Hand Behind Bad Catholic Music*

By J.A. Tucker

Well, if your missalettes are like those issued in more than half of American parishes, they're copyrighted by the Oregon Catholic Press (OCP)-the leading Catholic purveyor of bad music in the United States. Four times a year, it prints and distributes 4.3 million copies of the seemingly unobjectionable booklets (which OCP doesn't call missalettes).

But that's just the beginning of its massive product line, where each item is integrated perfectly with the others to make liturgical planning quick and easy. To instruct and guide parish musicians and liturgy teams, the OCP prints hymnals, choral scores, children's song books, Mass settings, liturgy magazines (with detailed instructions that are slavishly followed by parishes around the country), and CDs for planning liturgies and previewing the newest music.

This collection of products, however, does not include a hymnal-or anything else-designed to appeal to traditional sensibilities (its Heritage Hymnal is deceptively misnamed). The OCP's experts never tire of promoting the new, rewriting the old, and inviting you to join them in their quest to "sing a new church into being" (as one of their hit songs urges). The one kind of "new" that the OCP systematically avoids is the new vogue of traditional music that has proved so appealing to young Catholics.

The bread and butter of the OCP are the 10,000 music copyrights it owns. It employs a staff of 150, runs year-round liturgy workshops all over the United States, sponsors affiliates in England and Australia, and keeps songwriters all over the English-speaking world on its payroll. In fact, it's the preferred institutional home of those now-aging "St. Louis Jesuits" who swept out the old in 1969 and, by the mid-1970s, had parishes across the country clapping and strumming and tapping to the beat.

The OCP also sails under the flags of companies it has acquired, established, or represented along the way: New Dawn Music, Pastoral Press, North American Liturgy Resources, Trinitas, TEAM Publications, White Dove Productions, and Cooperative Ministries. Every time it purchases-or assumes the distribution of-another publisher, its assets and influence grow.

## **Power Without Authority**

But while the OCP dictates the liturgies of most U.S. parishes, it has no ecclesiastical authority. It's a large nonprofit corporation-a publishing wing of the Diocese of Portland-and nothing else. It has never been empowered by the U.S. bishops, much less Rome, to oversee music or liturgy in American parishes. The OCP's power over Catholic liturgy is derived entirely from its copyrights, phenomenal sales, and marketing genius. Nonetheless, it wields the decisive power in determining the musical culture of most public Masses in the United States.

And once a parish dips into the product line of the OCP, it is very difficult to avoid full immersion. So complete and integrated is their program that it actually reconstructs the sense that the liturgy team has about what Catholicism is supposed to feel and sound like.

But few of those subject to the power of the OCP understand that it's the reason why Catholic liturgy so often seems like something else entirely. For example, pastors who try to control the problem by getting a grip on their liturgies quite often sense that they're dealing with an amorphous power without a name or face. That's because very few bother to examine the lay-directed materials that are shaping the liturgies. Too many priests are willing to leave music to the musicians, fearing that they lack the competence to intervene.

Meanwhile, the nature of the OCP is completely unknown to most laypeople. Many Catholics shudder, for example, when they hear the words *Glory & Praise*, the prototypical assortment of musical candy that was already stale about 15 years ago but which mysteriously continues to be repackaged and rechewed in parish after parish. "Here I am, Lord," "Be Not Afraid," "City of God," "One Bread, One Body," "Celtic Alleuia," and (wait for it) "On Eagle's Wings"-these all come courtesy of the OCP.

But at the publisher itself, this moldy repertoire is not an embarrassment. On the contrary, the publisher brags that *Glory & Praise*, whose copyright it acquired in 1994, continues to be the best-selling Catholic hymnal of all time. And what about those prayers of the faithful that seem far more politically than doctrinally correct? They're probably from the OCP, too. A new edition of its *Prayer of the Faithful* is printed every year. (In what is surely great news for the unrepentant, the OCP brags that the volume helpfully includes "creative alternatives to the Penitential Rite.")

### **Hijacking of Catholic Truth**

It wasn't always like this. Before 1980, the OCP was called the Oregon Catholic Truth Society. It was founded in 1922 in response to a compulsory school-education law that forced Catholics to attend public schools. Archbishop Alexander Christie got together with his priests to found the society. Its aim: to fight bigotry and stand up for truth and Catholic rights.

In 1934, the Oregon Catholic Truth Society released a missal called *My Sunday Missal*. It was good-looking, inexpensive, and easy to use. It became the most popular missal ever (you can still run across it in used bookstores).

But the rest of the story is as familiar as it is troubling. Sometime in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Oregon Catholic Truth Society began to lose its moorings. Catholic truth had to make room for the Age of Aquarius.

Thus, in the course of a single decade, a once-reliable representative of Catholic teaching became reliably unreliable. Money given to the organization to promote truth was now being used to advance a revolutionary approach to Catholic life, one that repudiated

traditional forms of the faith. The only thing that did not change was the breadth of its influence: Under the new dispensation, it was still a powerhouse of Catholic publishing.

### **De Profundis**

If you've been keeping up with the OCP's latest offerings, you know that the songs from the mid-1970s don't begin to plumb the depths. The newest OCP hymnals are jam-packed with music from the 1980s and 1990s, with styles meant to reflect the popular music trends of the time. (Actually, they're about five years behind the times.)

They sail under different names (Music Issue, Journeysongs, Heritage Hymnal, Glory & Praise), but the content is similar in all of them: an eclectic, hit-and-miss bag with an emphasis on new popular styles massaged for liturgical use. (Worst choice: Spirit & Song, which "encourages the youth and young adults of today to praise God in their own style.")

Some of the newer songs sound like variations on the musical themes you hear at the beginning of TV sitcoms. Some sound like Broadway-style love songs. Others have a vague Hawaiian, calypso, or blues feel. You never know what's going to pop up next.

Not all of it is terrible. In fact, there are real toe-tappers among the songs. The question to ask, however, is whether it's right for liturgy. The answer from the Church has been the same from the second century to the present day: The Mass requires special music, which is different from secular music and popular religious music. It must have its own unique voice-one that works, like the liturgy itself, to bring together time and eternity. It's a style perfectly embodied in chant, polyphony, and traditional hymnody.

The OCP revels in its ability to conflate these categories; indeed, that's the sum total of its purpose and effect. And judging from its newest new line of songs and CDs-"we just couldn't wait until our next General Catalog to tell you about it"-your parish can look forward to a variety of ska and reggae songs adapted for congregational purposes.

### **How It Hooks You**

But let's go back to that innocent, floppy missalette. The OCP claims it has many advantages. Missalettes "make it easy for you to introduce the latest music to your parish, and changes in Church rituals are easy to implement." Thus the missalette is "always up-to-date."

It's also quite a bargain. If you buy more than 50 subscriptions to the quarterly missalette, you receive other goodies bundled inside. You'll get a Music Issue (the main OCP hymnal) to supplement the thin selection in the missalette. In addition, you'll receive a keyboard accompaniment book, a guitar book, the Choral Praise Comprehensive, a handy service binder, two annual copies of Respond & Acclaim for the psalm and the gospel acclamation, biannual copies of Prayer of the Faithful, two subscriptions to Today's

Liturgy (which tells liturgy teams what to sing and say, when and how), and one master index. And the more you buy, the more you get.

Why would you want all this stuff? Well, if you're in parish music, you'll quickly discover that the missalette has too few hymns to cover the whole season. The Music Issue seems like an economical purchase. But there's something odd about the OCP's most popular music book: There's no scriptural index. How do you know what hymns fit with what gospel reading?

No problem. Just buy a copy of Today's Liturgy, which spells it all out for you. If you want a broader selection of possible hymns, you can also order the OCP's LitPlan software or its monthly Choral Resources, which is visually more complicated than the Federal Register (but still contains no scriptural index).

If you follow the free liturgical planner closely, you'll notice you can purchase a variety of choral arrangements and special new music (copyright OCP) that match perfectly with the response, the hymnal, and the missalette (copyright OCP), which is itself integrated with the prayers of the faithful (copyright OCP) and the gospel (not yet OCP copyright). And so it goes, until you follow the complete OCP plan for each Mass, from the first "Good morning, Father!" to the last "Go in peace to love and serve others!" By making each element dependent on the next, the OCP has ensured a steady-if trapped-clientele.

### **Musical Gnosticism**

But why should the liturgy team go along with this program? The average parish musical team is made up of nonprofessionals. Its poorly paid members are untrained in music history; they have no particular craving for chant or polyphony, which often seems quite remote to them. Most musicians in average Catholic parishes would have no idea how to plug into the rite an extended musical setting from, say, the high Renaissance, even if they had the desire to do so.

The OCP understands this point better than most publishers. In an interview, Michael Prendergast, editor of Today's Liturgy, pointed again and again to the limited resources of typical parishes. The OCP sees serving such needs as a core part of its publishing strategy; its materials keep reminding us that we don't need to know Church music to get involved.

Lack of familiarity with the Church's musical tradition would not be a grave problem if there were a staple of standard hymns and Mass settings to fall back on. But it has been at least 30 years since such a setting was available in most parishes. The average parish musician wants to use his talents to serve the parish in whatever way possible, but he's at a complete loss as to how to do it without outside guidance. The OCP fills that vacuum.

Under its tutelage, you can aspire to be a real liturgical expert, which means you have attended a few workshops run by OCP-connected guitarists and songwriters (who explain that your job as a musician is to whip people into a musical frenzy: loud microphones,

drum tracks, over-the-top enthusiasm when announcing the latest hymn). These "experts" love the OCP's material because it allows them to keep up the pretense that they have some special knowledge about what hymns should be used for what occasions and how the Mass ought to proceed.

Real Catholic musicians who have worked with the OCP material tell horror stories of incredible liturgical malpractice. The music arrangements are often muddled and busy, making it all but impossible for regular parishioners to sing. This is especially true of arrangements for traditional songs, where popular chords give old hymns a gauzy cast that reminds you of the 1970s group Chicago.

The liturgical planning guides are a ghastly embarrassment. Two years ago, for example, the liturgical planner recommended "Seek Ye First" for the first Sunday in Lent ("Al-le-lu-, Al-le-lu-yah"). In numerous slots during the liturgy, OCP offers no alternative to debuting its new tunes. When traditional hymns are offered, they're often drawn from the Protestant tradition, or else the words are changed in odd ways (see, for example, its strange version of "Ubi Caritas"). The liturgical instructions are equally pathetic. On July 8 this year, the liturgical columnist passes on this profound summary of the gospel of the day: "Live and let live."

### **The Middle Way?**

Nevertheless, the OCP seems to have solved a major liturgical rift affecting today's local churches. Just as every parish used to have a low-Mass crowd and a high-Mass crowd, there are now two factions in parishes:

One wants more "contemporary" music of the sort seen in Life-Teen Masses-loud, rhythmic, and rockish. Another wants traditional music and sensibly asks whatever happened to the hymns of the old days. These two groups are forever at loggerheads and have been so for decades. In fact, most pastors are so sick of the dispute that they'll do anything to avoid talking about music at Mass.

This is where OCP steps in and serves as the peacekeeping moderate. After all, it's an established music publisher, and thanks to the missalette, it doesn't appear (at first) to be particularly partisan. Its literature contains enough traditional material to allow the liturgical team to claim they're sensitive to the needs of both the contemporary and traditional factions. Indeed, the OCP eschews the most extreme forms of grunge-metal Life-Teen music (though its Spirit & Song comes close). At first sight, it does appear to take the middle ground between two extremes. In truth, however, it's only slightly behind the curve of the most radical liturgical innovators-as it's always behind the curve in the popular styles it tries to imitate.

What about the other option of splitting up the Masses according to style, so that those who like traditional music can have their own Mass and the people who compose for the OCP can have theirs? Prendergast rejects this. Whether the style is traditional, contemporary, folk, or even "rock," Prendergast says, "everyone in the parish has to be

exposed to it." And what if a pastor just doesn't like rock and other contemporary styles? Prendergast says, "I would talk to the [chancery's] Office of Worship about him." I asked whether that means he would turn this poor priest in to the bishop. His response: "I would try to arrange for him to attend a workshop on liturgy."

With a great deal of knowledge, careful planning, and conscious intent, it is possible to manufacture decent liturgies even if the OCP music is all you have. You'll have to dig to find the good hymns (10 to 20 percent in the typical OCP publications), but it can be done. It's also true that not everyone involved with the OCP wants to destroy all that has gone before. There are probably many people on its middle-aged staff who from time to time cringe at the music, just as the people in the pews do. For his part, Prendergast is sure that he thinks with the mind of the Church, and there's no reason to doubt his sincerity.

In fact, there are periodic signs of hope. Regular readers of Today's Liturgy might have been astounded to see the recent one-page article buried in its pages that urged children be taught Latin hymns and chant. "The Second Vatican Council did not destroy the tradition of chant," said the writer, who was a student of the excellent English composer John Rutter. "We can still claim our chant heritage as part of the living Church's journey into the future." Indeed we can! But the news seems to be slow in getting around the OCP office. (The same issue contained a blast against a poor old lady who read a prayer book during Mass instead of singing goodness knows what.)

What's completely amazing about the entire OCP family is how lacking it is in self-awareness. The poor quality of contemporary Catholic music is a cultural cliché that turns up in late-night shows, Woody Allen movies, and Garrison Keillor's Prairie Home Companion. It is legendary among real musicians. Ask an organist what he thinks about today's Catholic music, and you will receive a raised eyebrow or a knowing laugh.

### **What You Can Do Right Now**

The truth is that no one is happy with the state of Catholic liturgical music-least of all musicians-and the OCP is a big part of the problem. So, what can you do? Step 1 is to get rid of the liturgical planning guides and use an old Scripture index to select good hymns that have stood the test of time (if you absolutely must continue to use the OCP's materials). Step 2 is to rein in the liturgical managers and explain to them that the Eucharist, and not music, is the reason people show up to Mass Sunday after Sunday. Step 3 is to get rid of the OCP hymnals and replace them with Adoremus or Collegeville or something from GIA (no, none of these is perfect, but they are all an oasis by comparison).

Finally, reconsider those innocuous little missalettes. These harmless-looking booklets may be the source of the trouble. Parishes can unsubscribe-accept no OCP handouts or volume discounts. There are plenty of passable missalettes and hymnals out there, and all the choral music you'll ever need is now public domain and easily downloadable for free ([www.cpd.org](http://www.cpd.org)).

In his book, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (Ignatius Press, 2000), Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger states clearly that popular music does not belong at Mass. Indeed, it's part of "a cult of the banal," and "rock" plainly stands "in opposition to Christian worship."

This is very strong language from the cardinal. And yet we know that many liturgy teams in American parishes will continue to do what they've been doing for decades—systematically reconstructing the liturgy to accommodate pop aesthetic sensibilities. The liturgy is treated not as something sublimely different but as a well-organized social hour revolving around religious themes.

It's up to you to decide the future course of your parish's liturgy: reverent worship or hootenanny. Despite what the OCP might tell you, you can't have both.

*J.A. Tucker is the choral director of a schola cantorum and writes frequently for CRISIS.*