

Editor's Preface

“ . . . a sense of prayer, dignity, and beauty; full adherence to liturgical texts and expressions; the assembly's participation and, therefore, the legitimate adaptation to local culture, at the same time maintaining the universality of language; the primacy of Gregorian chant as the supreme model of sacred music and the careful assessment of other expressive forms that make up the historical-liturgical patrimony of the Church, especially, though not exclusively, polyphony; and the importance of the 'schola cantorum', particularly in cathedral churches.”

*—His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, describing the
“fundamental criteria” of sacred music (31 May 2011)*

When I began providing music for Mass in the Ordinary Form, I found it extremely challenging to locate music that fulfilled basic requirements, such as using the official (prescribed) texts and being written in a sacred (rather than secular) style. The idea for the *Vatican II Hymnal* grew out of a desire to spare others the same difficulties I encountered as a parish music director.

The Hymnal is supposed to “fall open and work.” In other words, the goal is to create a book so clear and easy to use that one simply opens it and finds precisely what to sing, without worrying about its appropriateness for the liturgy. So, for instance, a priest may give this Hymnal to a music director at a college chapel (who need not be an expert in sacred music) and say, “Please use whatever you find in this book: I know in advance that it is appropriate for Mass.”

One of the many things that makes the *Vatican II Hymnal* unique is that we include the texts of the sung Propers (with Latin incipit) for every single Sunday and major feast for all three liturgical years. Considering that the Propers are the special prayers carefully assigned by the Church to each Mass for at least 1600 years, it is absolutely astonishing that we are the very first hymnal since the Second Vatican Council to provide these beautiful texts for the congregation's benefit. Any choir that sings Mass Propers, for instance, from the *Graduale Romanum* or the *Simple English Propers*, will have the assurance of

knowing that no matter which Proper they choose (even Graduals, Tracts, Offertories, etc.), the congregation will have the text right in front of them, along with all the other readings. Choirs and congregations will also appreciate that all the texts in the *Vatican II Hymnal* were typeset in a way requiring minimal page turning.

Another thing to note: organ accompaniments for all the Mass settings, hymns, Responsorial Psalm scores, Alleluia verses, etc. are being provided online free of charge, as well as numerous MP3's and training videos.^[1] Those familiar with Corpus Christi Watershed will not be surprised, being that in our short history we have made available for free and instant download many thousands of scores, MP3's, and practice videos which have been downloaded more than nine million times—and counting!

Throughout this Hymnal, the choices I made (concerning selection of hymns, transcription of Gregorian chant into modern notation, etc.) were made with the desire to provide the greatest benefit to congregations. It's important to stress the fact that any editor is faced with many choices, and more often than not, several choices make sense and have good qualities. However, in the final analysis, one is forced to make a single choice. The hope and prayer of this editor is that people find the Hymnal helpful and clear. I also expect that as the Hymnal undergoes future editions, improvements will continue to be made.

Many of the Latin chants one might (perhaps) expect to find in a Catholic hymnal are absent. However, it must be remembered that the *Vatican II Hymnal* is not a book for the choir; it is for the congregation. So, for instance, the musical setting of the *Victimae Paschali Laudes* is not included, because this would normally be sung by the choir. Music directors and choirs seeking these more complicated chants are encouraged to consult the *Gregorian Missal*, *Parish Book of Chant*, *Liber Usualis*, and so forth. The same is true of several “melismatic” Masses from the *Kyriale*, which were not included in their entirety. While exceedingly beautiful, it was thought that these complex settings might be more appropriate for choirs.

I previously alluded to the fact that Corpus Christi Watershed has become a leader in providing a vast quantity of free sacred music resources via the internet. Each of our liturgical websites is consecrated to one of the eight Jesuit Martyrs of North America. Because these websites contain literally thousands of pages of sacred music, MP3's, and training videos, it is not possible to thoroughly expand upon them here. Therefore, I invite you to visit ccwatershed.org and explore the treasures waiting there, which relate in one way or another to

1 To access all these resources, please visit: [<http://ccwatershed.org/vatican>]

the Martyr we chose. For example, lalandelibrary.org is dedicated to St. Jean de Lalande, and contains about 30,000 pages of rare sacred music treatises and editions. Before Watershed started freely sharing these gems with the world, some of these books could not be found in the United States, even in the prominent libraries of major cities. Because these books had been “hidden,” St. Jean de Lalande was chosen as the patron. His life is one of obscurity, especially compared to the detailed information we have about St. Isaac Jogues, whom he died alongside.

When the Mass Propers are spoken in the Ordinary Form, they are taken from the Roman Missal, but when sung, they are taken from the Roman Gradual.^[2] In the *Vatican II Hymnal*, the texts of the Propers come from the Roman Gradual, for the simple reason that it is exceedingly rare to find any Catholic parish whose congregation speaks the Propers on Sundays and feasts. Needless to say, if congregations desire to speak aloud the Propers at Mass, they should use the Missal Propers.^[3]

As mentioned earlier, an editor has many choices when transcribing Gregorian chant into modern notation, and there are numerous valid approaches. There are also choices regarding the rhythm of the chant, and this Hymnal has chosen the Solesmes method, which is, perhaps, the most widely used. One important point, however, which is possibly not as well known, is the principle that “all bar lines were not created equal.” In other words, as Dom Joseph Pothier stressed in the nineteenth century (and again in the Church’s official edition of the Chant), a quarter bar is a very short pause, a half bar is a slightly greater pause, a full bar is a significant pause, and a double bar (usually) signifies a significant ritardando.^[4]

A brief word on hymns. Our nineteenth-century predecessors did not possess the powerful typesetting programs we now enjoy. Necessity forced them to stack verse upon verse or include the ending verses at the bottom of the page, without musical notes. If one does not know the hymn tune by heart, this can cause difficulty. As much as possible, this Hymnal avoids these practices, in an effort to encourage congregational singing.

2 Several documents regarding this issue (including a lengthy article by Christoph Tietze) can be found at: [http://ccwatershed.org/sung_vs_spoken_propers/]

3 Incidentally, the translations provided for the Sequence are literal, because poetic English translations often do not convey the beauty contained in the Latin Sequences. These literal translations are to assist in understanding the Sequences (which are normally sung in Latin or English by the choir), and, needless to say, would not be proclaimed by the lector at Mass.

4 For more on this, please see my article “How to Read the Vatican Gradual,” *Sacred Music* 135:4 (Winter 2008): 21-28.

I strongly believe that one of the greatest abuses in Catholic hymnals has stemmed from “recycling” the same melody over and over again, using different texts. For instance, does it truly make artistic sense to adapt a melody (such as *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*, *Hymn to Joy*, or the *Tallis Canon*) to texts for Advent, Lent, Ordinary Time, and Eastertide? In light of this danger, and to guard against “tune fatigue,” I have attempted to save the really great and well-loved melodies for specific times of the year, and this effort can be seen in the temporal hymn suggestions.

That being said, it is best not to overwhelm congregations with numerous unfamiliar melodies. I’ve made every effort to strike a balance between well-loved and lesser known tunes.

A long-standing belief of many, including this editor, is that there is a serious deficiency of decent Communion hymns in most hymnals. It will be noticed that our book includes well over a hundred which, needless to say, are not limited to use at Communion alone.

Finally, I would like to suggest that many of the problems and difficulties we face as Catholic musicians can be solved by focusing on what really happens at Mass. At the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, two things happen: (1) Jesus Christ is made present on the Altar; and (2) Jesus Christ offers Himself to His Heavenly Father, just as He did on Calvary. Without question, the eight Jesuit Martyrs of North America always kept the image the crucified Christ, wounded for love of us, foremost in their minds. If we can manage to do this, especially at Mass, surely all our difficulties and crosses will become as so many hymns of praise to our Savior.

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He who does God's work does not do so in vain.