

The Musical Prelude to Vatican II: Plainchant, Participation, and Pius X**Walter William Whitehouse****Publication Date**

17-04-2008

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Citation for this work (American Psychological Association 7th edition)

Whitehouse, W. W. (2008). *The Musical Prelude to Vatican II: Plainchant, Participation, and Pius X* (Version 1). University of Notre Dame. <https://doi.org/10.7274/2801pg17546>

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THE MUSICAL PRELUDE TO VATICAN II:
PLAINCHANT, PARTICIPATION, AND PIUS X

VOLUME I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Notre Dame
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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April 2008

THE MUSICAL PRELUDE TO VATICAN II:
PLAINSONG, PARTICIPATION, AND PIUS X:

Abstract

by

Walter W. Whitehouse

The liturgical reforms of Vatican II have issued in two signal developments in modern American Catholic worship: the rise of more fully active participation by the lay faithful, and the virtual disappearance of the historic body of western church music, Gregorian chant. These two profound developments, however, were not a sudden product of *Sacrosanctum concilium*, but rather had a long, turbulent, and intertwined history in the decades of the twentieth century leading up to the council. That history began with the promulgation of the motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* in 1903 by Pope Pius X, which tied Gregorian chant and the active participation of the laity together.

This dissertation seeks to document the history of how *Tra le sollecitudini* “played out” in the United States, looking at its reception by clergy, musicians, and lay worshipers. The discussion is grounded in an overview of lay liturgical singing back to the early church,

the history of papal legislation on music, and the debate as it unfolded in the twentieth century (charted particularly through the major Catholic music journals.) In particular the notion of “full, conscious, and active participation” is shown to have had the sponsorship of all the pontiffs of the twentieth century back to Pius X, and the significant efforts to implement that participation through music and especially chant are chronicled, down to their end in frustration.

In our day of liturgical retrenchment, this research adds a cautionary note to romanticized notions of pre-Vatican II music; it shores up the commitment to fully active liturgical participation both by historical precedent and the long theological grounding of the twentieth century; and it offers a (non-political) groundwork for re-appropriating the “inestimable treasure” of the Gregorian inheritance.

To all the clergy, musicians, and especially choristers
who shared with me the formation
of the daily musical offering.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AER	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review / Ecclesiastical Review</i>
CAT	<i>The Catholic Choirmaster</i>
CEC	<i>Caecilia</i>
LAS	<i>Liturgical Arts</i>
OFW	<i>Orate Fratres / Worship</i>
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Vatican II



Plate I. Church Window.
Organ loft of Angel Guardian Croatian Church
(formerly St. Henry's Church), Chicago.

Pius X, between King David and Pope Gregory the Great,
holds the *motu proprio* in his hand.

INTRODUCTION

The pontificate of St. Pius X (r. 1903-1914) receives the attention of this dissertation because of its singular effort and devotion on behalf of “sacred music.”¹ One of the first gestures of Pius as a new pope was his great document on music in the church, *Tra le sollecitudini*, issued *motu proprio*² on St. Cecilia Day, November 22, 1903. This document was not only the greatest papal statement addressing music ever made up to that time; it also served proleptically as the “musical charter” of the embryonic liturgical

¹ The term “sacred music” is a notoriously difficult one. Its original meaning and intent was essentially to distinguish music used in church from that of “profane” or secular use. The *motu proprio* of Pius X, of course, wholeheartedly endorses such a distinction, further defining *musica sacra* as possessing the three qualities of holiness, true artistry, and universality (while broadening the meaning of the term as being an “integral part of the liturgy,” requiring worthy performance, etc.) Theological currents around the Second Vatican Council, however, challenged the notion of a music that possessed “sacredness” *in se*. The matter has not yet been “solved” theologically (*Sacro-sanctum Concilium* itself referring to functional considerations that make music “holy,”) and a felicitous term has not been found to use in the meantime (“Roman Catholic worship music” is accurate but unwieldy). The term “sacred music” will be used here (with due caveats) as it was in currency in the period under discussion. A full discussion of the varieties and problems of terminology is found in Robin A. Leaver, “What Is Liturgical Music?” in Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) 211-219. See also Miriam Therese Winter, *Why Sing?* (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1984) 196-204.

² *Motu proprio*, literally “by his own motion,” indicates a law promulgated by a Roman pontiff on his own initiative. In establishing laws for the universal church, two documentary forms are used by the papacy: the apostolic constitution and the *motu proprio*. Though the “highest form” of papal legislation is given in the form of an apostolic constitution, a *motu proprio* is nevertheless fully vested with legal authority (as contrasted with, for example, papal encyclicals and other communications of a didactic nature.) See John M. Huels, *Liturgical Law: An Introduction* (Washington D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1987) 8-10; and R. Kevin Seasoltz, *New Liturgy, New Laws* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1980) 172-4. Though many *motu proprios* were issued throughout the twentieth century (some fifty in the twenty-five years after Vatican II alone), *Tra le sollecitudini* was of such impact that it became synonymous with and known by the term “the motu proprio.” For Pius X’s intentions on the legality and force of the document, see below, 99-100; and Chapter 3, 38-44. Also see Rev. Juan Navarro, R., “Is the Motu Proprio of Blessed Pius Tenth on Sacred Music Binding in Conscience?” CEC 81 no. 4 (May-June 1954) 140-145.

movement, whose growth and activity during the twentieth century laid the groundwork for the liturgical reforms of Vatican II and world-wide Roman Catholic worship in the modern age.

Yet as we enter the new millennium, approaching the fiftieth anniversary of the council, the dust is still settling uncertainly on its reforms. The gaining of some historical distance has in particular brought the liturgical reforms of *Sacrosanctum concilium* under renewed scrutiny, building in some quarters a pressure to “turn back the clock.” Much of the revisionist impulse turns on a perception of Vatican II as constituting a dramatic break from the (recent) past; and in some ways (such as the universal permission for liturgical vernacular) that is the case. But in other very critical ways (such as the ecclesiology of the church as the whole people of God) the council remained within or retrieved constitutive historic traditions of the church, and indeed renewed those traditions. Such was the case with “full, conscious, and active participation” of the faithful at worship, and such was the case with congregational singing. Historically an obvious vehicle for involving the laity (though utilized to widely varying extents), congregational song following the council became a preeminent means (not of course the only one) for achieving “active participation.” But music is a defining element of liturgy, so freighted with cultural and symbolic meaning, so palpable and memorable in its various roles (even in its absence); and American Catholic liturgical music (in its new vernacular idiom) turned rapidly and ubiquitously to secular folk forms in the 1960s and '70s. Thus to some, the whole musical enterprise and indeed the very concept of congregational singing itself seemed the ill-

begotten offspring of a reform gone too far, expressing a trendy *zeitgeist*, and generally irritating to the Sunday church-goer.

The watershed nature of the reforms of Vatican II naturally captured the lion's share of analysis by theologians and historians of twentieth-century liturgy; falling by the wayside, largely overshadowed, was the history of Catholic church music in the United States in the period leading *up to* the council.³ That history (covering the first six decades of the twentieth century) turns on a central document: Pius X's *Tra le sollecitudini*. *TLS* was indeed the most comprehensive document on church music ever issued by a pope, but it was much more: it contained a stunning claim about "active participation" in the liturgy, bringing the phrase for the first time into official usage. No one would mistake St. Pius X for a trendy reformer. Staunchly and even vengefully orthodox, Pius sought finally to complete the universalizing liturgical agenda of the Council of Trent by claiming an official music of the Roman church, namely Gregorian chant, and issuing it in an *editio typica*

³ Surveys even of Catholic music history treat this period in America extremely lightly. Erwin Esser Nemmers' *Twenty Centuries of Catholic Church Music* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1949) allots just over three pages to the twentieth century; Karl Gustav Fellerer gives it only two pages in *The History of Catholic Church Music* trans. Francis A. Brunner, CSsR (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961). Otherwise the *motu proprio* and its influence are treated as a thematic element, usually brief, in many related histories of the American church, biographies of Pius X, etc. The fullest treatment from the point of view of the liturgical movement is Keith F. Pecklers, SJ, *The Unread Vision. The Liturgical Movement in the United States of America: 1926-1955* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) 255-279. A documentary history and some background for the *motu proprio* and its "effect" on various subsequent papal regulations and directives is given in Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music, 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979), chapter 9 (195-249) and chapter 11 (295-386). One master's thesis treats *Tra le sollecitudini* [hereafter *TLS*] directly: Stephen J. Macaluso, *Pope St. Pius X and the Reform of Catholic Church Music in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Master's thesis, University of Northern Colorado. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 1996). The most abundant sources for American Catholic music practices in the sixty years prior to Vatican II are various journals, which will form the heart of the research for this dissertation. Chief among these are the Catholic church-music journals *Caecilia* [hereafter *CEC*] and *The Catholic Choirmaster* [hereafter *CAT*]. These are primarily supplemented earlier by *The American Ecclesiastical Review* [AER] and later by *Orate Fratres/Worship* [OFW]. For more on method, see chapter 3, pages 211-215.

Vaticana. At the same time, Pius wanted chant and the singing at mass to be a means of popular participation – not only because of his innate pastoral sensibilities, but because he foundationally defined active participation in the liturgy as a graced act whereby the worshipper encountered “the true Christian spirit.” He thereby thrust a challenge into the church’s own inner dialogue about itself, a challenge which would continue to ferment until it finally demanded resolution at Vatican II.

Therefore this paper will seek to tell the history of how *TLS* “played out” in the United States from 1903 to 1963: how it was “received” (or not), with particular attention to the participative efforts it engendered. As a papal directive on music, *TLS* will be placed in context of the church’s thinking and legislation on music, broadly from the early church, more particularly in relation to Trent and the ensuing centuries. It will be seen in relation to reform movements also within the church, including the Enlightenment reforms, and the work of Solesmes and the Cecilians of the nineteenth century. The contextual overview will also trace popular precedents, namely the pan-historical urge of people to sing in their worship of God. In Christianity this impulse goes back to the beginning of the church, and appears in unexpected ways in the late medieval church as well as the post-Tridentine church, often with official approbation. The *motu proprio* itself will be given a careful exegesis, seeking especially what lay behind its provisions, what it hoped to achieve, and what its intentions were as force of law.

We then turn to the central focus of the paper, the American church in the twentieth century up to the eve of the council. Here we will seek to establish a “picture” of worship life in the US, and then how *TLS* entered into that picture (welcomed or

otherwise.) Within the Catholic family, we will explore how the clergy and religious, the lay people, and the musicians (ever a category unto themselves!) variously engaged *TLS*. A large part of the implementation of the *motu proprio* was put on the shoulders of education, and thus we will examine the notably developed network of American Catholic scholastic institutions of all levels that worked to realize Pius' dream. In a large sense that dream – of a chant-literate people who universally sang the church's official music at mass – finally failed. Thus we will seek also the reasons behind the eventual collapse, and indeed behind the eclipse of such an “inestimable treasure” as Gregorian chant.

Music is often thought to be a tangential topic in theology (even in liturgical studies!), secondary in importance to weighty concerns such as personal conversion and soteriology, ecclesiology, missiology, and social justice, to name only a few. In one sense that claim is true; but it can also be seen that music *plays a significant role* in each fundamental area of Christian life (how we sing at mass proclaims an ecclesiology; where would missions or social protest be without song?) Moreover, one finds a continuing series of knotted conversations over worship music in our own day, our “post-Christian” age: conversations that seem to yield no definitive “answers” yet continue to fascinate and draw. Why is that? It is because one cannot speak about worship music without entering into a theology of worship itself; and one cannot construct a theology of worship without referencing a theology of God. That is, when we speak about “sacred music,” we are immediately thrust into ultimate issues. There can of course be no question of trying to address those issues in any comprehensive way in a project of this size, but it is important to assert an awareness of their presence hovering over and behind the musical questions

taken up. Moreover, *TLS* in America played out against a complex historical backdrop: a booming and diverse Catholic culture, a rapidly expanding and institutionalizing church, and the liturgical movement as it gained influence from the 1920s, following the impetus of Virgil Michel. Each of these areas forms an important but vast background, as difficult to cover comprehensively as such other related topics as a “history of participation.” In this paper I have necessarily limited these discussions to their direct relation to church music and particularly to the *motu proprio*.

The late scholar James F. White has termed the attempt to implement *TLS* “a good run down the wrong road.”⁴ Yet even in this age, pairing “Gregorian chant” and “wrong” in the same reference doesn’t “sit right”; something seems unresolved. Yes, *TLS* dealt with a largely unpopular Gregorian chant, but it also proclaimed active liturgical participation of the people. What we might think of as “tradition” and “reform” – two very lively antagonists in today’s church – were held together by Pius X in the *motu proprio*. May this paper make a contribution to the proper resolution of reform and tradition within the music of the church’s liturgy.

⁴ “Part of the appeal of the chant was its association with earlier ages of piety but it was also vigorously promoted by Pope Pius X as a means of participation by the laity in singing in Latin the ordinary parts of the mass. In retrospect, strenuous efforts to bring this about seem like a good run down the wrong road.” James F. White, *A Brief History of Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993) 173.

CHAPTER 1

PROGRAM FOR A PONTIFICATE

1.1 Context

Tra le sollecitudini was but one initiative of a papacy which has been variously praised as saintly or villified as vengeful, but which by all accounts had a scope and eventfulness that was nothing less than extraordinary.¹ Our focus will be on the sacred music, concerning which alone Pius as pontiff wrote more than all the other popes combined. Yet while music is a critical issue for Pius, clearly a matter close to his heart, it is but a small part of the enormous quantity of general papal acts Pius initiated in his eleven-year reign: a massive total of some 3,322 pontifical acts. Among these acts were several which were both theologically constitutive and whose reach was history-making for Roman Catholicism. Robert Hayburn summarizes:

Every aspect of the life of present-day Catholics has been affected by his changes. He set in motion the codification of canon law of the Church. He took the first steps in Catholic Action, reformed the Breviary, changed the law concerning the reception of the Blessed Sacrament, reorganized the teaching of Christian doctrine, and reformed the worship of the Church; he wished people to take part in the ceremonies.²

¹ See the Bibliography under “Pius X” for references to his life and papacy.

² Hayburn, *Papal Legislation*, 195.

The breadth and quantity of these pontifical initiatives did not simply reflect the frenzied outworkings of a type-A personality (which would be difficult to attribute to this pope in any case.) Giuseppe Sarto, reluctantly inheriting the chair of Peter, beheld a world in which Catholicism appeared as never before dangerously adrift from its traditional moorings: a century of political upheaval, demographic change, social unrest, and intellectual development (including the nascent hegemony of a scientific world-view), all combined to roil the waters which the church now perilously navigated. Pius' predecessor Leo XIII had labored during a long pontificate (r.1878-1903) to restore some sense of viability for the church within the world, after the policies of his own predecessor, Pius IX, had left the papacy largely disdained, ignored, and wounded in the international arena. Italy itself by the later nineteenth-century had undergone the upheaval of *Risorgimento* and was governed by a "demagogic and anti-clerical Left"³; the loss of the Papal States in 1870, after 1,000 years, left the Vatican itself especially vulnerable and uncertain about its own future security – a state of affairs termed the "Roman Question," not to be settled until some six decades later (with the Lateran Treaty between Benito Mussolini and Pius XI, February 1929). Falconi asserts that by the dawn of the twentieth century, many believed the church to be a "lost cause," and "only Leo XIII's exceptional personality had delayed its end."⁴ So intense was public antipathy in Rome itself that both Pius IX and Leo XIII, as well as their successor, were literally "prisoners of the Vatican" during their reigns; Leo never even dared venture outside to St. John Lateran, his own cathedral. The catafalque of

³ Carlo Falconi, *The Popes in the Twentieth Century, from Pius X to John XXIII* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 4.

⁴ Falconi, *The Popes in the Twentieth Century*, xi.

Pius IX had been fortunate even to arrive at its burial place, so intense were the public riots it ignited⁵; and a final kick to Leo XIII's coffin⁶ symbolized the sentiment of an age which yet held the fate of the papacy in balance.

Pius X agonized over this reality; his melancholy was a well-known and distinguishing characteristic of his personality. And his inner anguish extended beyond the state of the church in the world; not only political, social, and intellectual developments threatened, but it seemed most acutely to him that the state of Christian faith and morals within individual lives was at a low point. His first pastoral letter to the Venetians as their new Patriarch is representative of the "bad news all over":

The separation of Church and state has banished God from politics; from science God has been driven out by the dogma of doubt; from art through realism; from law by faulty notions of flesh and blood; from the schools by the rejection of religious teaching; and last of all, from the family itself by secularizing marriage and depriving the family of sacramental grace.⁷

Indeed Pius uses his first encyclical as Pope, *E supremi apostolatus* (October 4, 1903; hereafter *ESA*) to spell out his apprehension of the dire condition of faith within and without, both in the world and within individuals. He appeals to the hierarchy, and through them to the church generally, to understand the depth and urgency of the problem:

⁵ Timothy McCarthy, *The Catholic Tradition: Before and After Vatican II, 1878-1993* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1994) 5.

⁶ Falconi, 2.

⁷ Francis Beauchesne Thornton, *The Burning Flame: The Life of Pope Pius X* (New York, Boston, Chicago, et al.: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1952) 94.

Truly “the nations are in tumult and the people devise vain things” against their Creator. More and more frequently God’s enemies cry out: “Depart from us.” As might be expected, We find extinguished among the majority of men all respect for the Eternal God and no regard paid in manifestations of public and private life to the Supreme Will. On the contrary, every effort and artifice is employed to blot out the memory and the knowledge of God.⁸

1.2 *Instaurare omnia in Christo*

Though he always demurred, even anguished, at the prospect of his periodic promotions within the hierarchy, and was reticent to the point of stubbornness to accept them,⁹ Giuseppe Cardinal Sarto was not elected to the Papacy because of his retiring ways. And thus while *E supremi apostolatus* painted the bleakest picture of the state of the church and the world, it signaled a bold and fundamental response: “Relying on the power of God in the work entrusted to Us, We proclaim that We have no other program in the Supreme Pontificate than that “of re-establishing all things in Christ, [Ephesians 1:10]” so that ‘Christ may be all things and in all. [Colossians 3:11]’”¹⁰ Note the assumed global sufficiency of “*no other program*”: “*Instaurare omnia in Christo*” meant first and last that the *identified real need of humankind is for Christ*. Thornton summarizes, “A return to the spiritual meaning of life seemed to him the most necessary task of his age.”¹¹

⁸ Vincent A. Yzermans, ed., *All Things in Christ: encyclicals and selected documents of Saint Pius X* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954) 6.

⁹ Thornton gives a long (apocryphal?) narrative of Cardinal Sarto’s resistance to accepting the papacy: 123-9. See also, among many others, Walter Diethelm, OSB, *Saint Pius X: The Farm Boy Who Became Pope* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994. Reprint of Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy ed., 1956) 82-89.

¹⁰ Yzermans, 5-6.

¹¹ Thornton, 192.

One might be surprised that liturgical music would be virtually at the “top of the list” of such an agenda, addressing so dire an apprehension of the world. In Pius’ view, liturgical piety had a central role to play in the “return to the spiritual meaning of life.” In particular, it was the active involvement of the faithful in the church’s liturgy, preeminently by the frequent and early reception of Holy Communion, which was to enable such an inner spiritual restoration to take place. Liturgical music, for its part, played two key roles: it was to be a means of entry, of closer active involvement of the laity in the liturgy; and the strictures that Pius’ legislation placed on liturgical music were meant to be emblematic of a decisive *turning away* from secularism as a competitor with the church in the arena of Truth. It was critical for Pius that the public worship of the church bespeak the eternal ascendancy of Christian Truth, and wear on her shoulder the mantle of a music which proclaimed historic Tradition.

In the sections which follow in this chapter, the various contexts of *Tra le sollecitudini* will be elucidated. First, a general synopsis of the pontificate of Pius X itself, of its protagonist and major themes, will be drawn up: how did Pius carry out the monumental agenda which he set for himself, *instaurare omnia in Christo*? Secondly, *TLS* will be set within the history of papal initiatives and pertinent local developments in church music since the time of the Council of Trent. Thirdly, the major points of the *motu proprio* itself will be summarized, and *TLS* will be seen in light of its significant antecedents during the years of the priestly and episcopal ministry of Giuseppe Sarto.

1.3 Pius X

Tra le sollecitudini was promulgated near the very beginning of Pius X's reign, less than four months after he took office; it was the first *motu proprio* issued by the new Pope, and was preceded only by the inaugural encyclical *E suprema apostolatus*. Yet the significance of *TLS* comes to light most fully in view of the manifold papal acts which eventuated during this eleven-year reign. Many important and lasting initiatives characterized Pius' pontificate, and along with his personal qualities earned him numerous sobriquets in subsequent years. Thus this overview of his papacy, particularly as it relates to *TLS*, will be organized around six sobriquets or titles of Pius X, under which can be gathered many of the most important aspects of his ministry, from among their abundance and variety:

Defender of the Faith

Curé de Campagne

Pope of the Catechism

Pope of Christian Doctrine

Pope of the Eucharist

Saint Pius X

1.3.1 "Defender of the Faith"

Pius XII honored his (then-sainted) predecessor with this title, and it is indeed a fitting place from which to begin. The title of course suggests Pius X's unqualified defense of Catholicism *qua* Catholicism, but in a broader sense it indicates his belief and lived assertion of the very necessity of God as the central reference of human existence:

“defender of faith,” as it were. There is no question, as noted above, that Pius felt he lived in the worst of times. For the world, in his eyes and in his time, both the “problem” and the “solution” were of cosmic magnitude: humanity was locked in a “great struggle” with God, a contest of wills between “Man and the Most High.” The apostasy and alienation of contemporary humans from God is “more than in any past age,” states Pius in *ESA*, as he wonders aloud whether we are finally, literally in the Last Days. Audacity and wrath are found at every turn, in the persecuting of religion, the combating of dogmas of faith, the uprooting of fundamental relations between God’s creatures and their Creator: the world is truly *posito in maligno*.

Carlo Falconi, writing from a post-Vatican II perspective (involving a joyful embrace of the world), takes Pius to task for this outlook, terming it “congenital pessimism” and “masochistic manicheism [*sic*].”¹² Both of these characterizations may be accurate, yet within the context of 1903 they are neither surprising nor entirely indefensible. From the era of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, true “tectonic shifts” had indeed occurred. As René Rémond notes, on the eve of the French Revolution “all European societies were still confessional; everywhere religion was intimately interwoven with the life of society, allied with the ruling power and legitimizing it, a presence in all collective activities, governing social existence as well as private conduct.”¹³ *All states and churches*, Remond explains, practiced “*cuius regio, eius religio*”:

¹² Falconi, 52.

¹³ René Rémond, *Religion and Society in Modern Europe*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999) 9.

the state could not admit a plurality of religions, because social unity and loyalty to the sovereign stemmed from commonly held values, and *commonly held values could only stem from religion*.¹⁴ Religious truths in the late eighteenth-century, moreover, of whatever stripe, were generally held to be absolute: there was no “middle road.”

This picture had entirely changed by Pius X’s accession. A series of political, social, and intellectual upheavals had occurred which fundamentally changed the role of religion in Europe. Historians debate the extent, the causes, and the timing, but there is virtual unanimity that a central theme of nineteenth-century Europe is the force of *secularization*.¹⁵ In the political arena, in this century of revolutions and nationalisms, traditional links of Church and State were riven, with the consequent de-confessionalization of States: unity and nationalism were no longer seen to flow from common *religious* beliefs. The French Revolution created a society that was, both by definition and law, “secular” (the American Revolution had done something similar): “theocracy” (of one form or another) was no longer assumed to belong to the definition of “statehood,” law, and government. From around 1800, the Industrial Revolution produced monumental social changes, as societies transformed character from rural-agrarian to urban-industrial. And the rise of science and the deepening influence of Enlightenment ideas worked to secularize the European mind; throwing off the shackles of religion was seen to be as progressive intellectually as it was

¹⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵ Even though there is debate over the meaning of the term itself. By some definitions, secularization did not really occur in the West until the 1960’s, when large-scale personal de-churching occurred. See further: Hugh McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe, 1848-1918* (New York: St. Martin’s Press; Houndmills, Basingstroke: Macmillan, 2000); Rémond, *Religion and Society in Modern Europe*; Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th century* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

politically. Representatively, the influential French pioneer of sociology, Auguste Comte, posited three stages in the growth of human knowledge: the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive/scientific.¹⁶ The developing atmosphere of positivism promised enticingly that “major improvements in the human situation were possible,” and most importantly, such improvements were accomplishable by human ingenuity. “Progress” was abroad, meaning freedom from the shackles of religion, and the search for “human answers to human problems.”¹⁷

This was the world Giuseppe Sarto intended to address, the milieu at the dawn of the twentieth-century in which he assumed the chair of Peter. In his view, expressed in the idiom of the time, the great contemporary error was the “enthronement of man in place of God”¹⁸; or as *E supremi apostolatus* put it, “the enormous and detestable wickedness so characteristic of our time: the substitution of Man for God.”¹⁹ At its heart this meant the “denial of the supernatural order” itself, by which society not only denied God (“divine intervention in the order of creation”)²⁰ but “lays the axe to the very root of the stem (which is the Church).”²¹ Consequences were grave. In the field of knowledge, “This falsely assumed negation of the supernatural principle is the characteristic of an equally

¹⁶ McLeod, 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸ Frances Alice Monica Forbes, *Pope St. Pius X*, new and rev. ed. (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1987, reprint of Burns Oates & Washbourne ed., 1954) 38.

¹⁹ Quoted in Yzermans, 4.

²⁰ From *Iucunde sane*, #15, quoted in Yzermans, 35.

²¹ *Iucunde sane*, #14.

false knowledge and has actually become the postulate of an equally false historical criticism.”²² In the matter of morals, “If you destroy the principle that there is a Divinity beyond this visible world, nothing is more evident than the fact that unbridled passions of the lowest and vilest kind will be unleashed and minds enslaved by them will run riot among disorders of every imaginable kind.”²³ Nor, as for the social order generally, “will civil authority ever be able to prevent other evils as long as it forgets or denies that all authority comes from God. . . . Take away God, and all respect for civil laws and all regard for even the most necessary institutions disappear. . . . Take away God, and men will destroy the very structure of the family, the primary and indispensable foundation of the whole social structure.”²⁴ The disastrous consequences which flowed for individuals and for society were, in Pius’ view, the inevitable retribution for turning from God. It is why at the end of his life, he watched with fateful resignation as Europe drifted toward war: “Peace without God is absurd. . . . There is only one party of order capable of restoring peace amid all this turmoil, and that is the party of God,” he had said as early as *E supremi apostolatus*.

For Pius, therefore, any solution of the modern predicament had to begin by addressing matters at the fundamental level of faith. The medicine must be equal to the illness: the reality of God must be acknowledged, revered, and its power brought to bear. Therefore the church, under siege in the modern world, must *itself* demonstrate the

²² *Lucunde sane*, #16.

²³ *Lucunde sane*, #19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Truth of its claims by turning to the Fount of all its being, the Source of its only strength, the very Subject of its own proclamation. The divine order, given priority, would see to the order of the world: “The Church is the depository of truths of the supernatural order and these, in turn, necessarily foster everything that is true, good and beautiful in the order of nature. The further these truths are traced back to the supreme principle of truth, goodness and beauty (who is God), the more effectively will the natural order prosper.”²⁵

In proclaiming this truth, a fundamental ecclesiological shift occurred: Pius deliberately and ideologically turned the Roman church within itself, and away from the modern world. Leo XIII had sought through diplomacy to restore relations between the Papacy and emerging nations; and in his pastoral letters, he tried to have some intellectual engagement and conversation with modernity. J.N.D Kelly says that Leo’s “main achievement was his attempt, within the framework of traditional teaching, to bring the church to terms with the modern world.”²⁶ Pius would be appalled by this. He was convinced that the church had to stand rock-firm on its patrimony of faith, *as over against the world*; and if the world went to pieces around it, it only proved the church’s point. Such a stand was perhaps not unnatural for one “not distinguished for learning and [with] no experience with politics or the wider problems of the church and world.”²⁷ (And it is on this point that the harshest

²⁵ Yzermans, 42.

²⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Popes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 311. Cited in McCarthy, 5.

²⁷ McCarthy, 6.

historical assessments have been leveled against Pius: “ascetic absenteeism, withdrawal, defensive centralization” among them.²⁸⁾

This *inward turn* had many and complex ramifications (one can sense already some implications for sacred music), but one very major aspect involved the church’s final turning away from being a temporal power. The image of the papacy, in Thornton’s words, “[t]oo often in the past . . . had been one of almost unrelieved worldly power and magnificence.”²⁹ Pius, responding to a world in which he felt the church was rejected, misunderstood, isolated, and humiliated, perhaps simply accepted the reality that the temporal power of the church, symbolized in the lost Papal States, was irrevocably past. Nevertheless Carlo Falconi, in an otherwise unflattering picture of Pius X, recognizes Pius’ orientation toward spiritual, non-worldly priorities as a sea-change, a matter perhaps even of historic importance for the church:

Despite its limitations . . . the pontificate of Pius X might have left a permanent mark or even proved a turning-point in the history of the Church, because for the first time in modern history it put into practice *an anti-temporalist ideal which had been lost sight of since the early centuries of the Church*.³⁰

The question, then, Falconi continues, was how this “anti-temporalist ideal had obviously to be worked out in terms of all the consequences it involved.”³¹ That is, how was the grand but vague “*Instaurare omnia in Christo*” to be carried out?

²⁸ See e.g. Falconi, 79-85; McCarthy 6-7.

²⁹ Thornton, 132.

³⁰ Falconi, 72-3. Italics added.

³¹ Ibid., 79.

As already noted, under this guiding “mission statement” Pius X’s papacy had enormously prolific initiatives, which will be surveyed in further categories below. But to characterize them generally, *apropos* of this section entitled “Defender of the Faith,” they may fairly be grouped under two macro-categories:

1) Zeal for the Truth of and in the church

and

2) Zeal for making that Truth come alive for people.

We might label these two areas “*Truth and Connectivity*.” That is, Pius always saw the *inner formation* of Christians – lay and clerical – around the revealed Christian truths in the custody the church, as the greatest good. “Have I formed Christ in you?,” using the Pauline phrase, bespoke his first concern. Had the faith been *received*? In this most fundamental sense (rather than a more narrow sense of doctrinal controversy) do we regard him here as “Defender of the Faith.” Thus, the reformation of Canon Law was important for establishing Truth; but its purpose was “for the common good of souls.” It is not enough to have the “Truth” without communicating it, “forming Christ” in people (one sees here the working impetus behind promoting participation in Gregorian chant); but also it is not enough to “connect” without relying on the repository of Truth, “since only from the Church does the supernatural life come.”³² As Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Sarto bemoaned the “cultural Catholicism” of the era, wherein sin was as ubiquitous as the

³² Yzermans, 35.

outward practice of faith, and people were “born Catholics but never became Christians.”³³

Finally, as “Defender of the Faith,” one must mention the *zeal* behind Pius’ ministry, the zeal which enables and energizes Truth and Connectivity. In celebrating the thirteenth centenary of Gregory the Great, Pius urges on his clergy:

How great is the fire that consumes [Gregory’s] heart with zeal! His words are lightning-bolts rending the perverse, scourges striking the indolent, flames of divine love gently embracing the fervent. . . . “Behold, the world is full of priests, but rare indeed is the worker who rests in the hands of God. It is true that we assume the priestly office; but the obligations of the office we do not fulfill.”³⁴

Falconi notes, “He would tolerate around him only men determined to use fire and sword to save the Church.”³⁵

1.3.2 “*Curé de Campagne*”: The Simple Country Pastor

“Almost all the people of Tombolo are poor. I have always lived amongst poor people, and I am myself poor; I understand them, and I am certain that they will understand me.”

So wrote Giuseppe Sarto to his mother as a newly-ordained priest in his first cure.³⁶

Instaurare omnia in Christo was not a contrived “mission statement” of a new Pope, intent

³³ Falconi, 20.

³⁴ Yzermans, 41-2.

³⁵ Falconi, 52. Falconi sums up well both the predicament and the pragmatism of Pius’ outlook: “Convinced by his congenital pessimism that the situation of the Church was not only dramatic but tragic, he had decided to take drastic measures . . . Anyone inclined to temporize, to let action wait on conviction, to go slowly in taking repressive measures, shocked and exasperated him so much that he would have nothing more to do with them.” Ibid.

on public relations or rehabilitating the image of the papacy. It rather reflected, in its spiritual grounding, the entire priestly and episcopal ministry of Fr. Sarto. Sarto – the name means tailor – was of peasant background, the first pope since Sergius IV (a millenium earlier) not to come from the aristocracy.³⁷ Biographers uniformly highlight the “legendary virtues” that characterized his person and his pastoral ministry: a humble simplicity, an uncommon touch with common people, untold acts of kindness and generosity toward the simple and the poor. He worked tirelessly and directly with his people, teaching, preaching, sharing Eucharist. Fr. Sarto talked and joked with all, and was chronically penniless from giving away possessions. He carried his own bags. This “intrinsically proletarian” priest carried over his “country ways” into the Vatican, somewhat to the alarm of the entrenched culture there. As pope he refused to accept people on their knees, or to allow clergy to kiss the papal slipper; he slipped money to the gardeners; his rural relatives moved into his modest share of the papal apartments; he continued to take snuff after meals, and wiped his pen on the white sleeve of his cassock. He continued to pay the King’s water bill at the Lateran Palace even after it had been seized from the papacy.³⁸ His own conception of the Christian life is aptly summarized in an early encyclical, *Acerbo Nimis*:

Christ showed that men should love one another as brothers, and should live here as becomes children of light . . . He also bids us to

³⁶ Quoted in James Bentley, *God’s Representatives: The Eight Twentieth-century Popes* (London: Constable, 1997) 30.

³⁷ Sergius IV’s brief pontificate lasted 1009-1012. A close predecessor of Pius X, Gregory XVI (1831-1846) was not of the aristocracy but was middle-class.

³⁸ Thornton, 141.

place all our anxiety and care in the hands of God, for He will provide for us; He tells us to help the poor, to do good to those who hate us, and to prefer the eternal welfare of the soul to the temporal goods of this life. . . . [I]s it not true that the proud man is urged and commanded by the teaching of Christ to strive for humility, the source of true glory? “Whoever, therefore, humbles himself . . . he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”³⁹

As a bishop and then pope, Sarto was particularly concerned about the spiritual formation of the clergy around these values. Priests who dedicated themselves to the “welfare of souls” were more esteemed than those “cultivating ecclesiastical and literary erudition.”⁴⁰ Charity was to be above all. “Great care,” he tells the Bishops, “you must exercise in forming the clergy in holiness. All other tasks must yield to this one.”⁴¹ Priests whose own lives were not exemplary had no business in the work of saving souls. In the encyclical *Lucunde sane* he appeals to Gregory the Great’s picture of the true priest:

He must die to all passions of the flesh and by now lead a spiritual life. He must have put aside worldly prosperity; he must fear no adversity, desire only what is interior. He must be a man whose aims are not thwarted by a body out of perfect accord through frailty, nor by any contumacy of the spirit. He is not led to covet the goods of others, but is generous in giving of his own. He is quickly moved by a compassionate heart to forgive, yet never so diverted from perfect rectitude as to forgive beyond what is proper. . . . In all that he does he sets an example so inspiring to all others, that in their regard he has no cause to be ashamed of his past. . . . By his practice and experience of prayer he has learned already that he can obtain from the Lord what he asks for.⁴²

³⁹ Yzermans, 49.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 9.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Pope Gregory I, *Pastoral Care* I:20. Translation from Henry Davis, SJ, *Ancient Christian Writers Series* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1950). In Yzermans, 40-41.

The goal of priestly formation was the same as that for all believers: *the formation of Christ in the inner person*.

Here we see the intense “personalization” and “internalizing” of the active social justice theme in Leo XIII’s thought. Leo advocated *social action* in the sphere of politics and labor; Pius emphasizes the “spiritual life” of those who, themselves poor, seek to serve the poor. As indicated above, Falconi’s view is that this turn toward non-temporal, spiritual pastoral objectives was a positive: a decisive turning-point for the church in the modern age, a virtual return to the spirit of early Christianity.⁴³ This spiritual turn, however, was to take place within the parameters of the church, and that entailed, for Sarto, the structures of and obedience to the hierarchy. *Obedience* was a life-long key value for Sarto, one which Falconi attributes to his being raised in the Veneto. In addressing the question of Popular Christian Action, for example, Pius writes

When treating anything concerning religious interests or the Church’s action in society, Catholic writers, like the rest of the faithful, should submit with their whole mind and heart to their Bishops and the Roman Pontiff. Above all, in any matter of consequence, they should take care not to anticipate the judgment of the Apostolic See.⁴⁴

This complex of values informed Pius’ approach to questions of social justice. As Cardinal Patriarch of Venice, he placed all social questions within the church’s purview, under obedience to the hierarchy:

[A]ll these problems . . . can only be completely and triumphantly solved by the Gospel and the Church – education, the family, rights and duties. Christian concord must be reestablished between classes!

⁴³ (Which for Falconi culminates in John XXIII).

⁴⁴ From *Fin Dalla Prima*, quoted in Yzermans, 210.

Peace must be brought to the world! Heaven must be populated! This is the mission I am called to carry out among you. Everything I say today I submit to the authority of God, Jesus Christ, and the Pope, His Vicar on earth. . . . The whole body of society is sick; all its most noble parts are affected; the very sources of life are tainted. The one refuge, the one remedy is in the Pope.⁴⁵

Pius believed the stratification of social classes to be immutable, and the Christian responsibility to be cooperation, rather than conflict, between classes. Poverty itself was blessed by Christ: “Let the rich be generous in alms-giving. Let the poor be proud to have been chosen as the images of Christ! Let them remove envy from their hearts and have patience and resignation.”⁴⁶ As early as ESA Pius outlined his understanding of spiritual priority in the social arena:

When in every city and village God’s law is faithfully observed, reverence shown for sacred things, the Sacraments frequented and the ordinances of a Christian life carried out, then, Venerable Brethren, We need labor no further in re-establishing all things in Christ. Such a work will not only realize the attainment of eternal salvation but also will contribute in large measure to the temporal welfare and advantage of civil society. When We arrive at this state of affairs, the wealthy classes will be more just and charitable to the lowly, and the latter will be capable of bearing with more tranquility and patience the trials of a very hard lot.⁴⁷

Strikingly, attending to material wants without addressing spiritual needs was seen as flawed:

They also seriously err who, while laboring in behalf of the people and especially in defending the cause of the poor classes, strive above all else to improve their material conditions. At the same time, however,

⁴⁵ Thornton, 94-5.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Falconi, 79.

⁴⁷ Yzermans, 11.

they remain indifferent to their spiritual welfare and the duties they must fulfill as Christians.⁴⁸

Politically, Pius argued for the stability of the church in a structure of mutual support with the state:

We must always remember that “nobody can wisely govern temporalities who does not know how to deal with spiritualities; thus the peace of the states depends on the peace of the Church.” From this it follows that there must be a perfect harmony between the civil and the ecclesiastical power, since both are ordained by God to support each other.⁴⁹

These social and political views are wholly conservative, yet further paradoxes were to be revealed in Pius X's character and outlook. When it came to matters which he saw as defending the faith, he could both counsel and practice the zeal of an “Avenging Angel,” seemingly at odds with his own humble character and dictum of “charity above all.” Citing St. Charles Borromeo as a model, Pius observes that Charles “yielded no ground on any matter that would endanger faith and morals.”⁵⁰ Falconi thus describes his reign as “a peaceable and non-violent theocracy, no doubt, but also if need be a rigid and inflexible one”;⁵¹ in the field of scholarship, Alec Vidler characterizes Pius' pontificate as “a theological reign of terror.”⁵² It is often said of Pius that he was “not political,” yet Falconi retorts that he was *enormously* political: it's just that he was “recklessly undiplomatic.” In his stand-off with the French Premier Emile Combes in 1905, Pius staunchly insisted on

⁴⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁵⁰ Yzermans, 172.

⁵¹ Falconi, 30.

⁵² Bentley, 42. See below, regarding Modernism.

the independence of the church in France. Thornton credits Pius thereby with putting the church on *spiritual* rather than *Gallican* terms. McLeod, for his part, rather notes Pius' fear of the un-hierarchical nature of the proposed French "Worship Associations"; and that in Pius "Combes met his equal in intransigence."⁵³ And in spite of his conservative social views, Pius did not always advocate strict obedience to the State:

[Catholics] must be as faithful in the loyalty and respect to "wicked rulers" when their commands are just, as they are adamant in resisting their commands when unjust. They must remain as far from the impious rebellion of those who advocate sedition and revolt as they are from the subservience of those who accept as sacred the obviously wicked laws of perverse men. These last mentioned wicked men uproot everything in the name of a deceitful liberty, and then oppress their subjects with the most abject tyranny.⁵⁴

1.3.3 Pope of the Catechism

Pius X believed strongly that the major cause of faithlessness in his age was ignorance of God's Word and of the church's teachings. Particularly repugnant to him was the general outward acceptance of religion, a social conformity that in reality masked immoral behavior and ignorance of Catholic teachings. In response, he turned his attention equally strongly to the teaching ministry of the church. Already in *ESA* he asks, "Who can fail to see, Venerable Brethren, that whenever men follow reason and liberty [i.e., as negatives] religious instruction will be the *principal means of restoring the empire of God* in their souls? How many there are who hate Christ and detest the Church and the Gospel

⁵³ McLeod, 61.

⁵⁴ Yzermans, 173.

more through ignorance than malice!”⁵⁵ In April, 1905 he addressed a major encyclical to bishops on the teaching of Christian doctrine, *Acerbo Nimis*; Yzermans characterizes it as the product of long years of pastoral teaching, (and as “tender” as the forthcoming *Pascendi* was “terrible.”⁵⁶) In *Acerbo* he is explicit about the debilitating power of ignorance:

[T]he chief cause of the present indifference and, as it were, infirmity of soul, and the serious evils that result from it, is to be found *above all in ignorance* of things divine. . . . [T]here are large numbers of Christians in our own time who are entirely ignorant of those truths necessary for salvation.⁵⁷

He then reminds the bishops, in the strongest terms, that they are commanded by Christ to feed his flock, “and to feed implies, first of all, to teach. . . . [T]he first duty of all those who are entrusted in any way with the government of the Church is to instruct the faithful in the things of God. . . . [F]or a priest there is no duty more grave or obligation more binding than this.”⁵⁸ Pius cites the teaching of the Council of Trent, which, “treating of the duties of pastors of souls, decreed that their first and most important work is the instruction of the faithful.”⁵⁹ He notes that Benedict XIV before him further defined the duties of clergy as not only preaching on feast days, but offering a separate program of religious instruction to young people on all Sundays. Pius asserts that Catechesis is more important than erudition for the welfare of souls: clever sermons can “tickle ears,” but without a solid catechetical foundation, the hearts of listeners will remain

⁵⁵ Yzermans, 10. Italics added.

⁵⁶ On *Pascendi*, see below, section IV.

⁵⁷ Yzermans, 47.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁵⁹ Yzermans, 51.

untouched. Noting a general neglect of catechetical activity among the clergy, Pius invokes Paul: “Faith then depends on hearing, and hearing on the word of Christ. ... How are they to hear, if no one preaches?” No harvest can be reaped without the planting of seeds, he counsels, and summarizes his argument again in the words of Benedict XIV: “There is nothing more effective than catechetical instruction to spread the glory of God and to secure the salvation of souls.”⁶⁰

And Pius led by example. From the earliest days of his ministry, Fr. Giuseppe Sarto had vigorously seen to the religious education of the people in his care. He established singing schools and directed choirs at each of his pastorates. As Bishop of Mantua and Patriarch of Venice, he had revived seminaries and actively taught in and led them. Most demonstrative of this passion was his continued teaching of the catechism to any who would come, on Sunday afternoons in the courtyard of St. Damaso, *as pope*. Falconi notes, “No Pope had ever dared so to humble himself. But to Pius X these catechism afternoons were among the most delightful hours of his pontificate.”⁶¹

It must be remembered that the chief aim of catechesis, for Pius, was directed not toward knowledge as its own end, but for amendment of life. The goal of teaching was “until Christ is formed” in its recipients. Knowledge is no guarantee of virtue, does not obviate a “perverse will and unbridled conduct.” It is however a prerequisite for Christian life: a condition, not a guarantee. When enlightened by the “light of truth,” the intellect is a “guide to holiness.” Catechesis was more important than erudite books on religion; as

⁶⁰ Ibid., 53.

⁶¹ Falconi, 19-20.

early as *ESA* Pius had pronounced his preference “for those [priests] who, while cultivating ecclesiastical and literary erudition, totally dedicate themselves to the welfare of souls through the exercise of the ministrations proper to a priest zealous for the Divine glory.”⁶²

To achieve these ends, *Acerbo nimis* promulgated six laws for the religious education of the universal church; these included provisions for weekly instruction of boys and girls by the parish priest, for their sacramental preparation (including First Communion), for adult catechetical instruction based on the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and (perhaps historically most significant) the establishment of CCD, the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. *Acerbo* finishes with a plea to the bishops for their cooperation.

To take up our *motif* again, in this matter of catechesis we find a paradigmatic expression of Pius’ concern for Christian Truth, and for its “Connectivity” to the faithful. All of the above initiatives had, as their goal, a deeper participation in the sacraments and the life of the church: the question at stake was the *clarity*, *delivery*, and *reception* of the content of faith. In this context we mention here three other major initiatives of this pontificate, which are “catechetical” in effect: the reform of administrative structures within the Vatican and the hierarchy; the reform of the Breviary; and the beginning of a new codification of Canon Law (completed during the ensuing pontificate of Benedict XV). In each instance, long-standing obligations had become obscured or ignored; in Pius’ own words, “changes in the course of time have brought about their neglect either because they were too difficult to fulfill or because they scarcely contributed to the common good

⁶² Yzermans, 9.

of souls.”⁶³ Pius sought changes in each area for the purpose of clarity, and so as better to suit the times, and in this he shows a side of himself that is able to recognize historical shifts; as *Arduum sane* continues, “. . . everything obsolete or abrogated [should] be removed and other things, where needed, be better adapted to the conditions of our times.”⁶⁴ In addition, we note again the concern with the inner forming of Christ in believers: the guiding principle behind each reform was the *common good of souls*. Truth and its Connectivity are again at the fore.

1.3.4 Pope of Christian Doctrine

Here we encounter the most celebrated and severe conflicts of Pius’ reign. If the process of catechetics was essential – part of what we are labeling “Connectivity” – no less so was the purity of doctrine which was taught – Truth: “if the water is polluted in its source, the whole stream will be infected.”⁶⁵ Yzermans calls this “purifying the waters of everlasting life, which he had commanded to be poured out.”⁶⁶ Pius, to no surprise, holds Divine Truth to reside within the Roman Catholic church, and therefore asserts redemption to take place solely through that church. “We must remind all, great and small, that if they wish to be saved, if they wish to follow the right road of reason, to be nourished on the truth, to find peace and happiness in this life, then they must look to this

⁶³ *Arduum sane munus*, quoted in Yzermans, 213.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

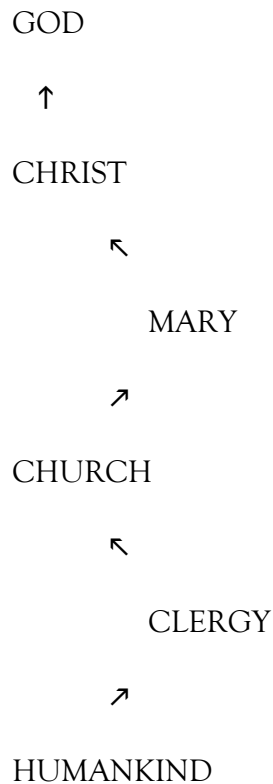
⁶⁵ Yzermans, 86.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 86-7.

Church.”⁶⁷ The process is expressed in a simple logic in *ESA*: The way to God is Christ; the way to Christ is the church (via Mary); and the way to the church, for sinful humanity, is through the clergy.

Venerable Brethren, no matter how much we try, only through Jesus Christ shall we succeed in calling men back to the majesty and empire of God. . . . We and you have the duty of bringing human society, now estranged from the wisdom of Christ, back to the discipline of the church. Then the church will subject it to Christ, and Christ to God.⁶⁸

Thus, a simple sequence was operative:



⁶⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7-8.

A second sequence was also involved, detailing the authoritative role of the church's teaching magisterium, the *stuff* of the process whereby humanity was to be brought, in the church, back to God:

DIVINE REVELATION



SACRED TRADITION



CONCILIAR DECISIONS



DOGMA / DOCTRINE



CATECHESIS



LIVELY FAITH IN PEOPLE

It is here that Pius saw his greatest spectre and most daunting challenge: what he believed to be the corruption of the historic deposit of Catholic Faith by a number of developments which he lumped together under the banner of “Modernism.” It is worth quoting a section of the letter *Editae saepe*⁶⁹ to get the sense of alarm this issue stirred up:

Since they attack the very root of faith either by openly denying, hypocritically undermining, or misrepresenting revealed doctrine, we should above all recall the truth Charles [Borromeo] often taught. “The primary and most important duty of pastors is to guard

⁶⁹ See Yzermans, p. 158 for background on this encyclical.

everything pertaining to the integral and inviolate maintenance of the Catholic Faith, the Faith which the Holy Roman Church professes and teaches, without which it is impossible to please God.” Again: “In this matter no diligence can be too great to fulfill the certain demands of our office.” We must therefore use sound doctrine to withstand the “leaven of heretical depravity,” which, if not repressed, will corrupt the whole. That is to say, we must oppose these erroneous opinions now deceitfully being scattered abroad, which, when taken all together, are called *Modernism*.⁷⁰

Pius issued two great documents in his attack on Modernism: the decree *Lamentabili sane* (July 3, 1907) containing a syllabus of sixty-five condemned errors; and the lengthy theological rebuttal, “what has remained without a doubt his most famous encyclical letter,”⁷¹ the “great and terrible” *Pascendi dominici gregis* (Sept. 8, 1907). Modernism was not an actual “movement” in the sense of a unified, coordinated attack directed intentionally toward undermining the church’s doctrinal foundations, and Pius has been criticized as “paranoid” for seeing it as such. His awareness, however, of fundamental changes in the modern *Weltanschauung* is not imaginary, as is evident in an early pastoral letter as Bishop of Mantua:

Not a few persons, although they have hardly even a superficial knowledge of the science of religion and still less put it into practice, claim to set themselves up as teachers and go about declaring that the church must adapt itself to the needs of the times; that it is impossible to maintain the pristine integrity of its laws; that the holiest men will from now onwards be the most pliant, prepared to sacrifice something of the old forms in order to preserve the rest. In this modern Christianity, forgetful of the ancient folly of the Cross, the dogmas of the faith must adapt themselves to the demands of the new philosophy; the public law of the Christian era must go warily before

⁷⁰ Yzermans, 165.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

the great principles of the modern era and confess at least the legitimacy of its defeat.⁷²

Whether he was “paranoid” or over-reactionary, Pius in any event understood the depth of the challenge of modernity to the church. As Timothy McCarthy describes it, *modernity* is “not a fully precise term or notion,” but one which “denotes the mentality or mindset that developed in the seventeenth century as a result of the scientific revolution, . . . is associated with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and . . . has continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Modernity unleashed major critiques of the past understanding of the physical sciences, politics, philosophy, economics, and religion; it was concerned with the progressive enhancement of human life by controlling the natural world; by creating a perfect society; by focusing on human reason, dignity, and autonomy; and by rejecting religion, faith, and revelation.”⁷³ Nathan Mitchell proposes that the origins of the modern “liturgical movement” can in fact be sought within the larger context of this “promise” of modernity – the promise of participation in social life (freedom, self-determination, a living wage, etc.) *without* participation in the life of God. The attempt to come to terms with such a challenge by the church may contain the roots of the liturgical movement’s incipient “participation” ideology.⁷⁴

While *modernity* was thus a force affecting the church from without, *modernism* represented an internal challenge to the church, of those wishing to reconcile various aspects of modernity with the Christian faith. Some among the era’s major thinkers,

⁷² Falconi, 43-44.

⁷³ McCarthy, 23.

⁷⁴ Nathan Mitchell, personal note, 2004.

including Eichorn, Hegel, Harnack, Kant and Schleiermacher, wrestled with new approaches to Christian faith. Nineteenth-century Catholic liberalism was championed in France by such as de Lamennais, Montalembert, and Lacordaire, culminating in Loisy's landmark *L'Evangile et l'Eglise*. The writings of the Abbé Loisy, who eventually left the church, formed much of the basis of *Lamentabili*'s demonized syllabus; the essential hermeneutic of these liberalizing forces is characterized and condemned in proposition #59 of the decree:

Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places.

Pascendi addressed the attacks against the church "from every side," within and without ("sometimes as if by an army in the battle-field and sometimes by cunning underhanded methods")⁷⁵ within four broad categories delineated by Pius: Agnosticism, Immanentism, Evolutionism, and Democraticism.⁷⁶ Pius saved his strongest invective, however, for those *within* the church who favored the "new way of thinking":

With equal severity and sorrow we must denounce another kind of war. This war is internal and domestic. The more hidden it is, the more dangerous it is. This war is directed against the very foundation and soul of the Church in order to destroy her, just as the axe is laid at the roots of the tree in order to fell it. Their efforts, however, are easily detected. They pollute the springs of Christian life and doctrine. They ignore the deposit of Faith. They undermine her divinely instituted foundations by boldly despising Papal and Episcopal authority, by attributing a new structure to the Church, by proposing new laws and obligations according to the teachings of their absurd philosophy. In a word, they would exchange the beauty of the

⁷⁵ Yzermans, 139.

⁷⁶ McCarthy, 47-48.

Spouse of Christ for the deceptive glamour of a new culture which is falsely called scientific.⁷⁷

The response of Pius X to the perceived challenge of Modernism calls to mind the presidential campaign slogan of the American politician Barry Goldwater in 1964:

“Extremism in the defense of Democracy is not a vice.” In Pius’ words,

Priests must be on guard against that liberalism which, under the pretext of doing good, abolishes the distinctions between right and wrong. . . . Liberal Catholics are wolves in sheep’s clothing. The true priest must unmask them and reveal their snares and evil designs. Men will accuse you of clericalism. You will be called papists, obscurantists, intransigent. . . . Be proud of the abuse! Be men and fulfill the command of Isaias: “Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their wicked doings and the House of Jacob their sins.”⁷⁸

Before Pius, both Leo XIII and Pius IX before him had similarly felt obliged to respond to a modernity increasingly impinging on the Catholic world. Pius IX, recognizing a restive Catholic theological world represented by major assemblies such as at Malines and Munich,⁷⁹ published his own *Syllabus of Errors* with the encyclical *Quanta cura* in 1864. The *Syllabus* concluded by summarily condemning the notion that “the Roman pontiff can and ought to reconcile and harmonize himself with progress, with liberalism, and with modern civilization.”⁸⁰ Pius Nono of course, with the approval of the assembled bishops of

⁷⁷ Yzermans, 139-40.

⁷⁸ From first pastoral letter as Patriarch of Venice, 1892, given in Thornton, 95.

⁷⁹ The Congress of Malines (Belgium) was held in the summer of 1863, and that of Munich shortly after in September the same year. Malines featured the French liberal Catholic Charles Comte de Montalembert, who urged the church’s *rapprochement* with political democracy; Munich featured Professor Johann Döllinger, advocating the free rights of academic scholarship. Discussion in Owen Chadwick, *A History of the Popes: 1830-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) 170-174.

⁸⁰ McCarthy, 42.

Vatican I, promulgated the controversial doctrine of papal infallibility in 1870 even as the papacy itself was being chased from Rome. Leo XIII was less harsh toward modernism than the Piuses on either side of him, being sensitive to the danger of the church simply being held irrelevant, marginalized in the modern world. Yet he too feared developments in the political and social world, represented, for example, in American democracy and pluralism; and he too feared liberalism in the church, a “deadly plague which infects [it] in its inmost recesses.”⁸¹ Leo responded to the growing philosophical and theological trends with his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of 1879, whereby he asserted Thomism as the official theology of the church. This was to be a coherent, “timeless” systematic theology responding to the challenges of Kant and the moderns who followed after his “Copernican revolution” in thinking; McCarthy notes it served as the theology of all popes after Leo, up through Pius XII.⁸²

But Pius X’s measures against modernism constituted a particularly brutal response, Falconi characterizing it as the “reconstitution of the Inquisition adapted to modern form.”⁸³ Utilizing various arms of the Vatican, including the Congregation of the Holy Office, the Congregation of the Index, the Consistorial Congregation, and a newly formed “secret police” (the *Sodalitium Pianum* from 1909), an atmosphere of suspicion and accusation infected the church. Teachers suspected of modernism were to be excluded from Catholic seminaries and Universities; every diocese was to have a “vigilance council”;

⁸¹ Ibid., 43.

⁸² McCarthy, 43.

⁸³ Ibid., 35.

publications had to pass Curial censorships. In September of 1910, an “anti-Modernist” oath (the “Oath of Faith”) was imposed on all clergy, teachers, and aspirants to ministry.⁸⁴

The zealotry of Pius’ policies became an issue some forty years later, in the *Disquisitio* weighing his canonization:

“[I]n the struggle against Modernism . . . [the] general objection is substantiated and supported by various positive facts. The main ones are: having allowed the so-called integralists to lay down the law in the Church even to bishops and cardinals; having fought the partly-secularized press; having made use of a secret-police instrument like the *Sodalitium Pianum*; and having struck at innocent and worthy men and induced a deep division among Catholics.”⁸⁵

Here the simple Curé de Campagne revealed another side, that of the Avenging Angel: he would brook no mercy in pursuing those who corrupted the faith. Functioning perhaps on a level of what Loisy characterized as “unconscious brutality,” Pius would have expressed surprise at the above *Disquisitio*, as he did to the Bishop of Cremona: “I am astonished that you should find excessive the measures taken to confine the flood that threatens to swamp us, when the error they are striving to spread is much more deadly than that of Luther, because it aims directly at the destruction not only of the Church but of Christianity.”⁸⁶ Various opportunities occasioned many similar remarks: “Kindness is for fools”; “War is not made with charity”;⁸⁷ “Let such as stir up discord be removed from

⁸⁴ The requirement of this oath was not removed until 1967 by Paul VI.

⁸⁵ Falconi, 42.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

every office. The church has no need of such apostles. They are, in fact, not the apostles of Christ Crucified; they are apostles of themselves.”⁸⁸

Evaluating Pius’ zealotry against modernism depended to a large extent on one’s theological bent. One writer even favorably compared Pius, in his single-mindedness, to Lenin:

It was the special mission of Pope Pius X, in a time of great material comfort, to recall a complacent generation to the stark realities of the creed, and, in retrospect, the world has been driven to an understanding of the vital importance of doctrine. While Pius X was Pope, Lenin, in his penurious exile, and with few followers, was almost alone in sharing with the Catholics a flaming conviction that it was much more important to get the doctrine right and prevent it from being perverted than to attract large numbers of adherents.⁸⁹

Alec Vidler, however, sums up a large body of opinion which sees Pius’ fearful vigilance as no less than “a theological reign of terror.”⁹⁰ Falconi, for instance, argues that the “check [in the field of ecclesiastical studies] ordained by Pius X was meant to be, and was, absolute, and it hit not only the scholars of his own time but future generations virtually right up to the pontificate of John XXIII. His anti-cultural measures produced a half-century of sterility that . . . was to weigh as a tragic inheritance upon the future of Catholicism.”⁹¹

Whereas McCarthy suggests that the Catholic church “solidified its identity and mission”

⁸⁸ Yzermans, 41.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 46.

⁹⁰ Reference in Bentley, 42. No source for Vidler cited.

⁹¹ Falconi, 71.

in this period by stabilizing itself as an institution over against the world,⁹² Loisy's description of Cardinal Richard might well be *apropos* of Pius X:

He wanted to be fair; and he was good, but within the limits permitted by orthodoxy and the Church's rules. But he lacked the background to enable him to understand the biblical question, or indeed, any contemporary question.⁹³

1.3.5 Pope of the Eucharist

If there were any issue which most potently represented Pius X's attempt to reclaim Catholics to a fervent faith and life in the church of the modern age, it had to do with practices surrounding the Eucharist. The name of Pius X, in the words of Peter Nissen, is "inseparably connected" with two important twentieth-century shifts in Catholic eucharistic practice: frequency of reception and the age of first communion.⁹⁴ Two great decrees issued under his aegis gave him his most recognizable sobriquet, "Pope of the Eucharist." *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* was issued December 20, 1905; it advocated the frequent, even daily, reception of Holy Communion for faithful laity. *Quam singulari*, issued August 8, 1910, lowered the appropriate age of discretion, and therefore of first communion for children, to around seven years. These two initiatives, though by no means lacking precedent, broached changes in Catholic eucharistic practices which had evolved and remained entrenched from the middle ages. If Pius' refrain were "The real

⁹² Falconi, 54.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹⁴ Peter J. A. Nissen, "Mobilizing the Catholic Masses through the Eucharist: The Practice of Communion from the Mid-19th Century to the Second Vatican Council," trans. D. Mader, in Charles Caspers *et al.*, eds., *Bread of Heaven: Customs and Practices Surrounding Holy Communion* (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1995) 145-164, here 145.

need of men is for Jesus Christ,” there could be no act more participatory than partaking of his Body and Blood; nothing more foundational toward *Instaurare omnia in Christo*; nothing more paradigmatic of “truth and connectivity.”

Pius’ decrees challenged both historical practice as well as current theology concerning sacramental reception. As is well known, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 made obligatory, after the “age of reason,” an annual sacramental Confession and Holy Communion “at least at Easter time” – the “Easter duty.” This annual reception, given as a minimum, unfortunately became the norm for most lay Christians in the middle ages; for some it may have gone up perhaps to three or four times yearly, a frequency mirrored eventually in churches of the Protestant Reformation. The Council of Trent and the *Catechismus Romanus* (1566) however tried to address this issue, as *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* asserts at the outset:

The Holy Council of Trent, having in view the ineffable riches of grace which are offered to the faithful who receive the Most Holy Eucharist, makes the following declaration: “The Holy Council wishes indeed that at each Mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only in spiritual desire, but sacramentally, by the actual reception of the Eucharist.”⁹⁵

The decree goes on to specify that “at each Mass” means “plainly enough the wish of the Church that all Christians should be *daily* nourished by this heavenly banquet . . .”⁹⁶

However, as Andreas Heinz points out, the Roman liturgical books published by order of

⁹⁵ Pius citing decree of the Council of Trent, Session XXII.6. Quoted in Yzermans, 215.

⁹⁶ Ibid. Italics added.

the Council of Trent did not “adequately pass on this reform tendency.”⁹⁷ The *Missale Romanum* of 1570 “describes the order of the Mass according to the model of the private Mass. The communion of the faithful therefore does not appear at all as a regular part of the *ordo missae*. It gives the impression of being a real intruder.”⁹⁸ A separate “communion rite” appears in the 1614 *Rituale Romanum* which “provides for the communion within the Mass the same order as for the administration of the sacrament outside the Mass, which are seen as of completely equal value.”⁹⁹ Thus in both the 1570 Missal and the 1614 Ritual, the reception of communion appears as a separated rite, implying no difference in whether reception takes place within or outside of Mass.¹⁰⁰ A “disconnect” thus occurred between Trent’s *doctrine* (all who attend mass should receive) and its *discipline* (reflected in its liturgical reforms.)

Following the Council of Trent, the publication of these new liturgical books, and the establishment of the Congregation for Sacred Rites in 1588, we enter a period described by Klauser as one of ritual uniformity via codification, and a rubricism often ignorant of liturgical history.¹⁰¹ Spiritual life was “determined only to a strictly limited

⁹⁷ Andreas Heinz, “Liturgical Rules and Popular Religious Customs Surrounding Holy Communion between the Council of Trent and the Catholic Restoration in the 19th Century,” in Caspers *et al.*, *Bread of Heaven*, 119-143, here 123.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 125.

¹⁰⁰ Often communion was distributed outside of mass, if at all. Heinz, “Liturgical Rules and Popular Religious Customs,” 143.

¹⁰¹ Theodore Klauser, *The Western Liturgy and Its History: Some Reflections on Recent Studies* trans. Frank L. Cross (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1952) 54-7. Klauser believes all of these deviations grew out of the silencing of the canon in the 7th century (Ibid., 41-2).

extent by the Liturgy. It [was] conditioned to a correspondingly greater degree by devotion to the Eucharistic Christ and His Sacred Heart, by the cult of Our Lady and by meditation.”¹⁰² As for the liturgy, it continued under what some would term a “defective” concept, grown up from the ninth century: as the “work of one man.”¹⁰³

A fateful problem with the Tridentine decrees on Eucharist was vagueness concerning the necessary disposition for reception of communion, the meaning of “frequent,” and the age of reason for children. With the growth of Jansenism from the seventeenth century, the issue of disposition became ever more stringent: Eucharist was understood as a reward for holy living, and rare would be the person with the sanctity for daily reception. The ever-increasing worship of God in the Sacrament meant also an ever-ascending “age of reason” for young Christians: the question became one of “safeguarding the august nature” of the Sacrament.¹⁰⁴ Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, First Communion became culturally tied to rites of passage, usually around the completion of schooling, thus around the age of thirteen or fourteen. During the nineteenth century a persistent Jansenism even pushed the age up to fifteen to nineteen years.¹⁰⁵

But the marginalizing of sacramental reception had been a matter of controversy for some centuries, only continuing into the nineteenth century “with increased warmth,

¹⁰² Ibid., 49-50.

¹⁰³ Clifford Howell, SJ, “From Trent to Vatican II,” in Cheslyn Jones, *et al.*, eds., *The Study of Liturgy* revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 285-294, here 285-9.

¹⁰⁴ Phrase is from *Quam singulari* of Pius X, translated by Joseph Collins, SS, in Yzermans, 245-250, here 246.

¹⁰⁵ Nissen, “Mobilizing the Catholic Masses,” 159-160.

and not without bitterness,” as ESA has it. In *Editae saepe* (1910), Pius bolsters his case by reaching back to cite the views of St. Charles Borromeo, a “true reformer”:

Pastors and preachers [writes Borromeo] should take every possible opportunity to urge the people to cultivate the practice of frequently receiving Holy Communion. In this they are following the example of the early Church, the recommendations of the most authoritative Fathers, the doctrine of the Roman Catechism (which treats this matter in detail), and, finally, the teaching of the Council of Trent. The last mentioned would have the faithful receive Communion in every Mass, not only spiritually but sacramentally.¹⁰⁶

STS invokes further precedents of the seventeenth-century Popes Innocent XI and Alexander VIII. The French priest Louis Gaston Adrien de Ségur published the widely-disseminated *La Très Sainte Communion* in 1860, refuting the Jansenist position of communion as “reward for proven holiness.” De Ségur presented an understanding of the Sacrament rather as the *means* of achieving a holy life. His work was supported by an *Imprimatur* from Pius IX, who himself wrote two encyclicals endorsing similar views. And while the climate of theological opinion remained divided, Leo XIII initiated a series of “threshold lowerings” for reception. A curial declaration from the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars in 1891 rescinded all restrictions on daily communion for religious orders.¹⁰⁷ And the “breakthrough” encyclical *Mirae Caritatis* of May, 1902 denounced as *error perniciosissimus* the limiting of eucharist to “spiritual” people, Leo excoriating the “senseless fears of many and the specious arguments for abstaining.”¹⁰⁸ A continuity is

¹⁰⁶ Yzermans, 171.

¹⁰⁷ *Collectanea Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide* (Roma 1907) no. 1763. Cited in Peter Nissen, “Mobilizing the Catholic Masses,” p. 149 n.15.

¹⁰⁸ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 34 (1901-1902) 642 ff. Cited in Nissen, “Mobilizing the Catholic Masses,” 150.

thus evident between Leo XIII and Pius X in their approach to (and encouragement of) *direct participation* in the eucharist through communion.

In 1863 the Italian priest Giuseppe Frassinetti wrote an important pastoral handbook supporting daily communion, which went against the grain of established manuals of moral theology of the day¹⁰⁹; Fr. Frassinetti's ideas directly influenced a young priest, Giuseppe Sarto. As bishop of Mantua, Sarto implored his clergy at parochial visitations not for elaborate episcopal receptions, but that the people be turned out to receive the sacrament. In 1897, Sarto as Cardinal Patriarch of Venice hosted a large Eucharistic Congress, on the scale of a civic festival involving all walks of life, complete with four cardinals from Rome, five archbishops, twenty-three bishops, and spectacular processions. As pope, Pius' initial encyclical *ESA* does not give prominent play to Eucharistic matters, with an important exception: in describing what a world "re-established in Christ" would look like, four key items are listed:

- in every city and village God's law is faithfully observed
- reverence is shown for sacred things
- the Sacraments are frequented
- the ordinances of Christian life are carried out¹¹⁰

But it was in *STS* that Pius struck the decisive blow for the future of frequent communion. There he asserted that daily reception of the Sacrament was open to all,

¹⁰⁹ Giuseppe Frassinetti, *Manuale Pratico del Parocho Novello* (Genova: Gioventù, 1866). Discussion here follows Nissen, "Mobilizing the Catholic Masses," 150-53.

¹¹⁰ Translations from Yzermans, 11.

young and old, on the condition of two essential requirements: the state of grace, and a right intention. Importantly, a degree of definition was given to these two conditions:

“State of grace” meant freedom from mortal sin (with no intentions toward venial sin)

“Right intention” consists in this: that he who approaches the Holy Table should do so, not out of routine, or vain-glory, or human respect, but that he wish to please God, to be more closely united with Him by charity, and to have recourse to this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.”¹¹¹

The crucial blow was struck against Jansenism: the Sacrament was medicine, not reward.

The primary purpose of the holy Eucharist is not that the honour and reverence due to our Lord may be safeguarded, not that the sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue, but that the faithful, being united to God by holy communion, may thence derive strength to resist sinful desires, to cleanse themselves from daily faults, and to avoid those serious sins to which human frailty is liable.¹¹²

One legacy from the middle ages remained problematic: even with increasing frequency of reception, “Mass piety” and “Communion piety” remained largely disconnected. As Heinz says, “The Mass remained more or less an affair of the priest. The faithful used the ‘space’ of the Mass to practice their private exercises (rosary, contemplation of the passion of Christ, adoration of the exposed sacrament, spiritual communion.).” If there *were* to be a reception, “the Mass served [simply] as a space for personal preparation.”¹¹³ Even in Pius X’s decrees, the matter of ensuring reception within the context of the Mass was left

¹¹¹ *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, trans. Joseph Collins, SS, in Yzermans, 217-8.

¹¹² Forbes, 78.

¹¹³ Heinz, “Liturgical Rules and Popular Religious Customs,” 143. Communion was commonly distributed before, during, and after mass, with no attention to its place and meaning within the eucharistic rite. In the US this practice held true right up to the time of Vatican II.

unaddressed, no “necessary connection” being made between celebration and reception.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, as Gerald Ellard notes, Pius published a catechism and prayerbook for the Catholic laity of Rome in 1905 (the same year as *ESA*) which included the full Ordinary and Canon of the Mass, and *recommended the Mass-text as the preferred prayers* for Sunday use.¹¹⁵ This was only eight years after the vernacular translation of the Missal had come off the Index of Forbidden Books!

There are some who, seeing how consumed Pius became in the struggle against Modernism, somewhat cynically view his sacramental initiatives essentially within that conflicted context. Thus frequent communion becomes part of the “defensive offensive” against Modernity, and is seen as a rather calculated “attempt to strengthen the social plausibility of Catholicism.”¹¹⁶ As Peter Nissen would have it, “The ecclesiastical authorities . . . undoubtedly realized that frequent practice of the sacrament was one of the principle means whereby the church could restore its hold on the masses in a modernizing society, and with which Catholicism could obtain a new plausibility.”¹¹⁷ Yet even so skeptical a judge as Carlo Falconi allows that, as far as the sacraments are concerned, “there can be no doubt about the Pope’s good faith, especially after his views had been confirmed by experience both in Mantua and in Venice. It is also significant that the *motu proprio* on frequent Communion preceded by five years that on early Communion for children. His

¹¹⁴ Nissen, “Mobilizing the Catholic Masses,” 154.

¹¹⁵ Gerald Ellard, S.J., “The Liturgical Movement in Catholic Circles,” *Religion in Life*, XVIII (Summer, 1948), 372. Cited in Ernest Benjamin Koenker, *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1954) 212 n.10.

¹¹⁶ Nissen, “Mobilizing the Catholic Masses,” 145.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

basic care was clearly to make the sacramental relationship between the believer and God as constant and continuous as possible; and seen in this perspective early Communion for children was only a detail.”¹¹⁸ Pius addressed a crowd of young French first communicants at Easter in 1912, and there seems no doubt his sacramental views are authentically expressed here:

Finally, my last desire, dear children, is that the Love of Our Lord dwell in you so that it will change you into so many apostles, zealous for His glory. You will be the treasure of your families. You will make them happy by your good conduct. Your example alone will win them to receive Holy Communion frequently. At school, you will bring your companions to imitate your piety; in the parish, all will look upon you as good angels; finally, everywhere about you, by your prayers, by your prudence, by the attraction of your modesty, you will contribute to the conversion of sinners, and to the return of unbelievers and the indifferent to Jesus Christ.¹¹⁹

1.3.6 Saint Pius X

O God, who didst raise up Blessed Pius X to be the Chief Shepherd of Thy flock and didst specially endow him with devotion to the Holy Eucharist, zeal for Thy divine truths and love of Thy liturgy; grant, we beseech Thee, that we who venerate his memory on earth, may enjoy his powerful intercession in heaven. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

So read the prayer at St. Peter’s Basilica in June, 1951, on the occasion of the beatification of Pius X (a process begun a scant nine years after his death, in 1923) under the Papal Bull *Quoniam Christus dilexit ecclesiam*. The prayer highlights what Falconi echoes were the “three distinguishing features of his pastoral ministry from the first moment he

¹¹⁸ Falconi, 22.

¹¹⁹ Thornton, 160.

assumed the responsibilities of a priest”:¹²⁰ Eucharistic centeredness, Doctrinal / Catechetical zeal, and an ethos of the liturgy as (in later terminology) “source and summit” of Christian life. Pius left a mixed legacy to the church, but certainly his saintliness is tied to several initiatives which were foundational, which endured, and which bore great fruit. If catechism was the great human endeavor for *instaurare omnia in Christo*, then participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the church was the key to divine connectivity. The eucharistic reforms, addressed above, formed one part of his great legacy. A second part of the legacy, his liturgical piety, was enunciated in “what liturgists hail as the ‘most famous sentence of our century,’”¹²¹ certainly the most famous paragraph of *Tra le sollecitudini*:

Animated as We are with the most ardent desire to see the true Christian spirit once again in every way reawake and grow strong among all the faithful, the first thing to which We must attend is the holiness and dignity of the temple in which Our people assemble for the one purpose of acquiring that spirit from its *first and indispensable source, namely, their own active participation in the sacred mysteries* and in the solemn public prayer of the Church.¹²²

TLS thereby became the “charter statement” for the liturgical movement, and sixty years later these very words were to be invoked at the Second Vatican Council: now addressing liturgy as a preeminent, urgent priority, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy reaffirmed that

¹²⁰ Text from Falconi, 20.

¹²¹ Koenker, 7.

¹²² Ibid. Translation from *Motu Proprio on Sacred Music* (Conception, MO: Altar & Home Press, 1945) 3. Italics added.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else. For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit . . .¹²³

Finally, citing Falconi again, Pius X's decisive turning of the church away from concerns over its (now besieged) earthly powers to its inner spiritual life, symbolized preeminently in the liturgy, marked a revolutionary return to the spirit of the early church which would find its fruition in the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council. Pius was hostile to a Modernism and to theologians who were later vindicated at the Second Council. And it was left to the liturgical movement to actually connect the (newly frequent) reception of communion to the mass liturgy itself. Moreover, the "solicitude" of *TLS*, which after all was toward the beauty, grandeur and dignity of the liturgy, might be open to suspicion by some. But the intent was not an archeological exercise, a refurbishing of the church, "staging beautiful liturgical assemblies" while running from a hostile world.¹²⁴ Rather, for Pius, the external participation of the faithful was a mark of an "internal and true participation" in the life of Christ, "of which external participation is merely a means and a sign."¹²⁵ And for this saint, Gregorian chant "occupies pride of place in the armory of the liturgical renewal, for it constitutes the chief manner of participation."¹²⁶

¹²³ SC II.14. *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982) 8.

¹²⁴ Rev. A. M. Roguet, OP, "The Theology of the Liturgical Assembly," *Worship* 28 no. 3 (February 1954) 129-138, here 137.

¹²⁵ Following Roguet, *ibid.*, 138.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

CHAPTER 2

MUSIC HISTORY

Vide ut quod ore cantas, corde credas.
– Gelasian Sacramentary¹

The dimension of Pius X's papacy which showed such interest in sacred music reflected both a strong idiosyncratic interest of this pope, as well as an area which fostered concern within Christianity from the very beginning. In voicing his concerns and proposals toward church music, Pius would have to “get in line” behind a long procession of prior popes with their own initiatives and legislation.² His papal legislation reflects much continuity with past activity (raising the question of why supposedly “autocratic” laws had to be re-voiced time and again over centuries.) It can be said that Pius X was trying to bring his foot down, with a sense of exasperated finality – “this time we really mean it” – on the perennial issue of “profane” music in the liturgy. It can also be said that Pius saw (in the work of Solesmes) an opportunity to “complete” the liturgical work begun pursuant to the Council of Trent: the issuance of *editiones typicae* mandating a universal usage

¹ The entire passage is: *Vide ut quod ore cantas, corde credas; et quod corde credis, operibus probes.* “See that what you sing with your mouth, you believe in your heart; and what you believe in your heart, you demonstrate in your actions.” (My translation.) Cited in Godfrey Diekmann, “Lay Participation in the Liturgy of the Church,” Chapter VI in Episcopal Committee of The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, directors, *A Symposium on the Life and Work of Pope Pius X* (Washington, D.C.: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1946) 137-158, here 137.

² Hayburn, *Papal Legislation* is the standard reference book in English on this history.

around the “pristine norm of the ancient Fathers.” But with Pius there is a seminal shift in papal music legislation: if Gregorian chant was emblematic of “Truth,” this Truth needed to be “connected” to people. People had to be allowed to sing.

2.1 Early Church

“As they did in former times,” states *TLS*, and to the best of our knowledge, it was so in the early days of the Church. The early evidence is scarce, while the liturgical structures of the Church were still evolving in the first centuries of the Common Era.³ It is considered probable that the Church inherited from its surrounding cultures both the Jewish approbation of ceremonious music in its central cultic life, as well as cautions from the currents of late classical antiquity, which asserted the highest music to be internal, in the realm of spirit. The few New Testament references show a generally positive regard for singing – the central one being the Hallel hymn sung after the Last Supper (Mt 26.30; Mk 14.26). Most likely, according to Gregory Dix, early Christian worship life was characterized by simplicity and directness.⁴ Quentin Faulkner, acknowledging the scarcity of detailed evidence, attempts a plausible picture of early Christian music:

[I]t tended to be more spontaneous and emotional than calculated and intellectual. It retained (for a time at least) a considerable degree of spontaneity and ecstatic improvisation. It was music not primarily for

³ The best close study in English is Edward Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996). Reprint of 1992 Grove Edition.

⁴ Reference from James McKinnon, ed., *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge, New York et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 2.

personal devotion, but for the corporate worshiping community. And it was almost exclusively vocal.⁵

Joseph Gelineau suggests music undoubtedly played its most universally acknowledged role (“the union of voices expresses union of hearts”),⁶ Paul encouraging the Romans to live in harmony “so that together with one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15.5-6). The association of music with unity of spirit is famously attested around 100 CE by Ignatius of Antioch:

Wherefore it is fitting that you concur with the intention of your bishop, as in fact you do. For your most renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is attuned (συνήρμουςται) to the bishop as strings to a cithara. Hence it is that Jesus Christ is sung in your unity of mind and concordant love. 2 And to a man you make up a chorus, so that joined together in harmony and having received the godly strain (χρῶμα Θεου) in unison, you might sing in one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father . . .⁷

But even from the earliest times the Church always recognized, in the words of Philipp Harnoncourt, not only the *necessity* but also the *danger* of music.⁸ The positives and negatives stand in constant and sometimes paradoxical theological tension, like the

⁵ Quentin Faulkner, *Wiser Than Despair: The Evolution of Ideas in the Relationship of Music and the Christian Church* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996) 51.

⁶ Joseph Gelineau, SJ, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship: Principles, Laws, Applications*, trans. Clifford Howell. (London: Burns & Oates, 1964) 22.

⁷ This essay draws various early references from the compendium in James McKinnon’s *Music in Early Christian Literature*. As do other historical surveys (e.g. *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*), footnotes will cite the original work first, followed by the item number given in McKinnon’s book (referenced as MECL). The citation for this reference, for example, is *Epistle to the Ephesians* IV, 1-2; MECL 21.

⁸ “We must not play down the prophets’ criticism of the cultus. Song and music – like all other art-forms and all other forms of celebration – contain within themselves a certain tendency to burst their bounds and to claim existence in their own right. Their true place as being bound up in a larger and over-arching whole is forgotten; art, music, and song become ends in themselves.” Philipp Harnoncourt, “The Anthropological and Liturgical-Theological Foundations of Music in Worship,” *Studia Liturgica* 28 (1998) 14-31, here 27.

“goodness of creation” and the “temptations of the flesh.”⁹ For the Jews, splendid “ornamental” music for the cult was deemed acceptable only on the condition that evident priority was given to the faithful following of God’s will.¹⁰ The approbation of music in the New Testament is similarly not unqualified: “I will sing with the spirit” (1 Corinthians 14.15) pointing to inwardness, conversion, and conviction; while “I will sing with the mind also” necessitating reason and intelligibility.¹¹ Individual virtuosity as personal display is directly addressed as liturgically out-of-bounds: “What then, brethren? When you come together each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation” (1 Cor 14.26-27). The early church orders reflect the ongoing problem of negotiating the narrow straits between musical danger and necessity:

Even your very rejoicings therefore ought to be done with fear and trembling: for a Christian who is faithful ought neither to repeat an heathen hymn nor an obscene song, because he will be obliged by that hymn to make mention of the idolatrous names of demons; and instead of the Holy Spirit, the wicked one will enter into him.

*Didascalia V, 10/2*¹²

By the 4th and 5th centuries, written evidence is much more abundant, revealing a tightening of proprietary boundaries, and marked heightening of invective around Christian music for worship, both vocal and instrumental. John Chrysostom

⁹ Here following the discussion of Faulkner, 57.

¹⁰ Amos 5:21-25.

¹¹ This concept will play a decisive role in the many eras of liturgical history which are to follow, as we will see below. It is given pronounced accent in *TLS* and was of course a major thrust of the liturgical movement and Vatican II.

¹² (Early 3rd c.), from Robert Skeris, *Chroma Theou* (Altötting: Coppenrath, 1976) 33, cited in Faulkner, 54.

emblematically asserts that “Where the aulos is, there, by no means, is Christ.”¹³ While both late Greco-Roman and Jewish cultures had philosophical/moralistic boundaries around music, the late 4th-century Christian polemic remains, as James McKinnon says, “in a class by itself for its vehemence and uniformity.”¹⁴ It has not been authoritatively settled what drove this sudden escalation of stricture, and scholars enumerate a complex of possible factors. Fellerer cites the mass conversions following the Edict of Milan in 313, and the need for the church to “internally consolidate” its worship life in the face of so many new (and less thoroughly prepared) converts.¹⁵ Quasten reads the patristic polemic as fear of the connection of pagan musical practice with the “cult of idols.”¹⁶ Tertullian two centuries earlier had warned Christians away from the theatre for these very reasons. McKinnon suggests that apart from paganism, “moralism” per se could simply be responsible; the fathers had strong concerns over sexual morality, and sexual licentiousness in late antiquity was connected in particular with the theatre, wedding songs, and female singers themselves. The moral concern is related as well to the growth of classical concepts of music among church fathers (all classically educated).¹⁷ Henry Chadwick points out that by the philosophical association of musical modes with moral categories, “the danger of lascivious association is expressly formulated by Plato, and passes into the stream of

¹³ McKinnon, 1 (no citation given).

¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵ Fellerer, 13.

¹⁶ See discussion in Johannes Quasten, *Music & Worship in Pagan & Christian Antiquity*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, OP (Washington, DC: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983) 60-62; 121-137.

¹⁷ Fellerer, *History of Catholic Church Music*, 13-16. On the Platonic influence, see Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, second edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) 96-7.

Christian thinking.”¹⁸ These are the classical roots which “lie behind the medieval and modern demands that church music and indeed all sacred art ought to have a distinctive ecclesiastical style,”¹⁹ a prominent claim of *TLS*. Moreover the fathers, “aware that a concrete message about God and Christ and salvation is entrusted to the Church and has to be communicated, add to Plato the fear that the music may obscure the words.”²⁰ Intelligibility was thus a facet of “pitting spirit against flesh,” in the intellectual air of the time; externals were to be abhorred, in particular pagan music.

Faulkner notes the parallels here with the rise of monasticism and its spread from desert to urban center, suggesting cenobitic influence in the “asceticization” of Christian music (including new exclusions of women singers.) Certainly monasticism is a major contributor to the later 4th-century “psalmodic explosion,” as a wave of enthusiasm for psalmody spread from East to West. Yet in an important liturgical observation, McKinnon asserts that in spite of the above complex of factors, the common practice of unaccompanied psalmody was an entirely *separate phenomenon* from the condemnation of instruments.²¹ Faulkner evokes some of the interplay of these various factors:

As the church continued to confront and battle pagan practices, the assertion became unanimous that the pleasure offered by music was fundamentally only God’s concession to those who were weak in spirit, a means of making the psalms and other sacred songs more palatable to them. God required music (in and of itself) as little as

¹⁸ Henry Chadwick, “Why Music in Church?,” in *Tradition and Exploration: Collected Papers on Theology and the Church* (Norwich, UK: Canterbury Press, 1994) 203-216, here 211.

¹⁹ Chadwick, “Why Music in Church?” 210.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.

²¹ McKinnon, 3-4.

sacrifice; but as a means of rescuing the weak from error, God tolerated sacrifice and musical instruments under the old covenant. Such childish ways could not be permitted under the new covenant. But since music itself was too firmly rooted in scripture and practice to be eliminated, and the charm of music was too obvious to be denied, Christian leaders sought to curb its attractiveness by insisting that the songs of the church be performed in such a way as to place fundamental emphasis on the content of the text. Even more important, however, was their insistence that singers must examine the disposition of their souls as they sang. That disposition had to be such that the music evoked a *compunctio cordis* (contrition of the heart) rather than any sensual pleasure.²²

These matters are laid out in one of the most important patristic documents on ecclesiastical music from the time, the sermon *De utilitate hymnorum* of Niceta, bishop of Remesiana (d. after 414). We quote a central passage here:

Thus, beloved, let us sing with alert senses and a wakeful mind, as the psalmist (*hymnidicus*) exhorts: “Because God is king of all the earth,” he says, ‘sing ye wisely” (Ps. 46.8), so that a psalm is sung not only with the spirit, that is, the sound of the voice, but the the mind also (1 Cor 14.15), and so that we think of what we sing rather than allow our mind, seized by extraneous thoughts as is often the case, to lose the fruit of our labor. One must sing with a manner (*sonus*) and melody befitting holy religion; it must not proclaim theatrical distress but rather exhibit Christian simplicity in its very musical movement (*ipsa modulatione*); it must not remind one of anything theatrical, but rather create compunction in the listeners.

Further, our voice ought not to be dissonant (*dissona*) but consonant (*consona*). One ought not to drag out the singing (*protrahat*) while another cuts it short (*contrahat*), and one ought not to sing too low (*humiliet*) while another raises his voice (*extollat*). Rather, each should strive to integrate his voice within the sound of the harmonious (*concinentis*) chorus and not project it outwardly in the manner of a cithara as if to make an immodest display. . . . And for him who is not able to blend (*aequare*) and fit himself in with the others, it is better to sing in a subdued (*lenta*) voice than to make a great noise, for thus he

²² Faulkner, 70-71.

performs both his liturgical function and avoids disturbing the singing brotherhood.²³

Elucidating the themes contained here, music for Christian rites must:

1. Enable intelligent participation: center on text (“sing ye wisely”)²⁴
2. Possess a “manner and melody” which is *befitting* sacred function
3. Not go to extremes of expression²⁵
4. Not bear inappropriate (here, “*theatrical*”) associations: the patristic *pompa diaboli*
5. Stir up a religious response (here, “*compunction*”) in listeners
6. Exhibit a modicum of artistically skillful performance (“*consona*”) (i.e., not be negligently rendered); recognize that some have more suitable musical gifts.
7. Yet subjugate individual display to the corporate enterprise of liturgy.

What is remarkable about this document from the turn of the 5th century is its almost complete enunciation of themes which will form a *leit-motif* in the subsequent history of church music, returning again and again down to Pius X’s own time, indeed finding their place in *Tra le sollecitudini*.

²³ *De utilitate hymnorum* 13; MECL 311.

²⁴ Faulkner cites a thematic comment of John Chrysostom: “From strange chants harm, ruin, and many grievous matters are brought in, for those things that are lascivious and vicious in all songs settle in parts of the mind, making it softer and weaker; from the spiritual psalms, however, proceeds much of value, much utility, much sanctity, and every inducement to philosophy, for the words purify the mind and the Holy Spirit descends swiftly upon the mind of the singer.” *In psalmum xli*, I (trans. Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1950] 68). Faulkner, 69 n. 66.

²⁵ Clement of Alexandria speaks of “extravagant” music: “now mournful, and then licentious and voluptuous, and then frenzied and frantic.” *Stromateis* VI. 11, 89:4-90.2. (trans. Skeris, *Chroma Theou*, 78). Faulkner, 69 n. 66. Niceta here insists, rather, on “*Christian simplicity*.”

One senses in these themes, here as later on, always a combination of theological principles at work, as well as practical human exigencies or proclivities: some music simply “takes too long”; personal display is felt inherently inappropriate in the liturgy – even in the fifth century, “no one likes a show-off”; and music always threatens to take control unto itself of the unfolding liturgy. As Philipp Harnoncourt sums up, “song and music – like all other art-forms and all other forms of celebration – contain within themselves a certain tendency to burst their bounds and to claim existence in their own right. Their true place as being bound up in a larger and over-arching whole is forgotten; art, music, and song become ends in themselves.”²⁶ Gregory the Great, as is well known, lambastes a “reprehensible custom” among deacons, who seem drawn to the ministry by the “enticing duties” of sacred music; they enjoy “charming” worshippers (particularly during the *Exsultet*) while failing to lead righteous lives. Thus, “the chanter, the minister, angers God by his manners while pleasing the people with his voice.”²⁷ The danger of the sweetness of music was no novelty, Basil the Great issuing a similar warning almost three centuries earlier:

While the brass of the cithara and lyre respond to the plectrum from below, this psaltery has the source of its harmonious strains from above, so that we too might be anxious to pursue higher things, and not brought down to the passions of the flesh by the pleasure of song.²⁸

²⁶ Harnoncourt, “The Anthropological and Liturgical-Theological Foundations of Music in Worship,” 27.

²⁷ *Décret de Saint Grégoire le Grand sur les Chantres Diacones* (Decree of St. Gregory the Great regarding Diaconal Singers), in Amédée Gastoué, *Les Origines du Chant Romain* (Paris: Alphonse Picard & Fils, 1907) 284. Translation from Hayburn, 5.

²⁸ *Homilia in psalmum i*, 2; MECL 133.

Yet it had been Augustine (also in a well-known struggle with inner compunction over the beauty of music)²⁹ who nevertheless saw that music could contain an expression of joy that was beyond the power of words, fit for the ineffable God.

For this is to sing well to God, to sing in jubilation. What is it to sing in jubilation? To be *unable* to understand, to express in words, what is sung in the heart. . . . The jubilus is something which signifies that the heart labors with what it cannot utter. And whom does jubilation befit but the ineffable God? For he is ineffable whom you cannot speak. And if you cannot speak him, yet ought not to be silent, what remains but that you jubilate. . . . “Sing well unto him in jubilation” (Ps. 32.3).³⁰

In a process still lost in shadows of time, the “ecstatic meditation” and “patterned improvisation” of wordless Eastern melody (“originating in the Orient and in Mediterranean culture”) interacted with the inner, contemplative western classical tradition to produce Gregorian chant.³¹

2.1.1 Congregational Participation

Since the focus in this essay is on the participative aspects of Pius X’s work, it is well to review briefly what is known about congregational participation in the centuries that chant and the liturgy were developing and being elaborated. For some time there has been

²⁹ “Yet when it happens to me that the song moves me more than the thing which is sung, I confess that I have sinned blamefully and then prefer not to hear the singer.” *Confessiones* x, xxxiii, 50; MECL 352.

³⁰ *In psalmum xxxii*, II, S. I, 8; MECL 356. Augustine also had to consider (as would the church of the Reformation) the proselytic force of cultic singing, so successfully capitalized on by the Donatists in fourth-century North Africa. “The people wanted it and enjoyed it,” says Chadwick. “Moreover, Augustine could remember the lump in his own throat and the tears in his own eyes induced by the Milan chanters when he first went to hear Ambrose, months before he had decided to become a Christian. In other words, music could be a bridge. He did not want to burn it.” “Why Music in Church?” 209.

³¹ Descriptions from the evocative account in Fellerer, 16. The birth, evolution, and transmission of Gregorian chant remain, of course, the “central problem” of the genre.

a “conventional wisdom” about this participative history (from the fourth century to the *ars nova* in the fourteenth century) which has only lately come under cautious revision.

The “traditional” view regarding people and chant in the liturgy is one of gradual disenfranchisement. It has been considered natural to presume that the early Christians inherited a practice of sung psalmody from synagogue usage, and that “[w]hen we look at the patristic era (especially the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries), we find that the people’s singing in the liturgy was taken for granted.”³² It is indeed well-established that from the late fourth century, as the Psalm during the liturgy of the Word at mass evolved from a “reading” to a “response,” people participated in sung responsorial psalmody (singing a verse, part of a verse, or an acclamation such as “alleluia” to the solo cantoring of the entire psalm).³³ The form of such responsorial psalmody was also attested at vigil services, during communion and other places in the mass, and at offices.³⁴ Though of course none of these early popular chants survive,³⁵ it is postulated that they were simple in order to be accessible. From this early song stratum arose a “first layer” of simpler chants (roughly 650 melodies to 750 CE) which, according to Paul Westermeyer, “certainly grew out of a

³² Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments*, 82.

³³ For a description of this responsorial practice, and a hypothesis on its evolution into books of the Gradual, see Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology and the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 62-5.

³⁴ Margot Fassler and Peter Jeffery, “Christian Liturgical Music from the Bible to the Renaissance,” in Lawrence A. Hoffman and Janet R. Walton, eds., *Sacred Sound and Social Change* (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992) 87-8.

³⁵ The first manuscripts to contain any indication of melodies (marks made “*in aperto campo*”) date from the late 8th and 9th centuries. Diastematic (i.e., staffed) notation does not develop until the 11th century.

congregational base.”³⁶ This first layer developed within the evolving forms of the Proper (Introit, Gradual, Alleluia/Tract, Offertory, and Communion) and the staggered introduction into liturgy of the items of the Ordinary (Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei). Westermeyer, synthesizing a number of authors, goes on to elucidate five developments which gradually, through these centuries, attenuated the participatory singing of the people:

1. A more complex stratum of proper chants which emerge “suddenly” in the 9th century, concurrent with musical notation which makes transmission possible.
2. Musical and textual elaboration of chant forms: tropes and sequences.
3. Development of *scholae cantorum* for the training of skilled singers, in Rome as well as northern Frankish lands.
4. The liturgical imposition of Latin upon the Franks (via Pepin and Charlemagne) and upon barbarian peoples invading Rome, to all of whom it remained unintelligible.
5. The early development of polyphony via organum.³⁷

Westermeyer asserts that the “art” principle, with the help of skilled musical specialists, gained slow ascendance over the people’s participation, and a necessary liturgical tension between the two was lost.

For the first time in the history of the Church, a musical repertoire as such, recognized as superb, obtained an authoritative status equal to that of the texts themselves. The practical art of the cantor, who re-created the word by singing it in a way handed down by tradition, suffered eclipse behind an achievement of fine

³⁶ Paul Westermeyer, *Te Deum: The Church and Music* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998) 106.

³⁷ Ibid., 106-7. A similar reconstruction is found in Joseph Gelineau, SJ, “Music and Singing in the Liturgy,” in *The Study of Liturgy*, 497-502.

art, musically defined and fixed. . . . It was created by specialists in vocal technique and was intended for elite singers so highly trained expressly to perform it that one might call it *bel canto*. . . . The active and intelligent participation of the faithful in the basic rites then became more and more reduced.³⁸

This view gained attention and emphasis, following the *motu proprio*, during the growth of the twentieth-century liturgical movement; and it found prominent expression in post-Vatican II scholarship, initially by Joseph Gelineau and more recently by Edward Foley.³⁹ In his 1992 book *Re-envisioning Past Musical Cultures*, however, Peter Jeffery seriously challenged major components of this thesis, among them: that the early sources give us reliable evidence for congregational singing; that cantorial “virtuosity” was the culprit in bypassing the people; that Latin was not in currency among European peoples; that Gregorian chant “as an art . . . was always completely removed from people.”⁴⁰ Jeffery lambasts such “simplistic ideological answers to what are in reality very important and complex questions”:

In what ways was medieval chant genuinely related to the music of the early church, and how can historians establish such historical relationships? What roles did professionalism and “congregationalism” actually play in the historical development of Christian liturgical music, and how did their interrelationships change over time? And of course, what was the relationship of

³⁸ Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments*, 196-7.

³⁹ Edward Foley, “The Song of the Assembly in Medieval Eucharist,” in Lizette Larson-Miller, ed., *Medieval Liturgy: A Book of Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1997) 203-234.

⁴⁰ Ignoring, on this point, “the many parallels that scholars have repeatedly claimed to detect between it and European folk music.” Discussion at Jeffery, 76-86, here 82. See on this topic, John Caldwell, “Relations between Liturgical and Vernacular Music in Medieval England,” in Susan Rankin and David Hiley, eds., *Music in the Medieval English Liturgy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 285-293. (Further discussion below.)

liturgical chant to the larger musical culture of both the late antique and medieval periods?⁴¹

Jeffery notes that “[i]n view of all that has been written about this question [of people’s participation] during the last few decades of liturgical reform, it is quite surprising how little critical research has actually been done on it,”⁴² and in a startling statement goes on to illustrate “a good example of a very significant question that has never been investigated historically . . . [viz.:] *The fact is that, for most of the chants of the Ordinary and Proper of the Mass, we do not know when or how they originated, what their original purpose or meaning was, and who originally sang them.*”⁴³ While Jeffery was railing in particular against loose scholarship in service of a given ideology, his work nonetheless points out that, in the understandable attempt by scholars to outline Christian liturgical music in the first millenium, much that is very provisional has indeed been presented as fact.

As though accepting this gauntlet, Edward Foley some five years later produced a detailed essay on “The Song of the Assembly in Medieval Eucharist.”⁴⁴ Acknowledging finally that “[t]here is no single contemporary resource which adequately maps the breadth of congregational singing in Christianity through the Middle Ages in the West,”⁴⁵ Foley assembles a prodigious amount of research in his survey of the items of the eucharistic

⁴¹ Jeffery, 82.

⁴² Ibid., n. 60.

⁴³ Jeffery, 80 n. 57. Italics added. A clear exception would be the responsorial Psalm, which Jeffery himself had documented in “The Introduction of Psalmody into the Roman Mass by Pope Celestine I (422-432): Reinterpreting a Passage in the *Liber Pontificalis*.” *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 26 (1984) 147-65.

⁴⁴ *Medieval Liturgy*, 203-234. The magisterial study on the origins of the Proper would subsequently appear in James McKinnon’s *The Advent Project: The Later-Seventh-Century Creation of the Roman Mass Proper* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000).

⁴⁵ Ibid., 203.

Ordinary (including the “general responses”), Proper, and other possible areas for song. In view of the impossibility of historical certainty, Foley’s essay is a model of how these questions may best be approached. Even with an item such as the *Agnus Dei*, for example, whose historical entrance into the western rite is comparatively clear, much more concerning the people’s role can only be inferred from historical sources. These suggestions are valuable, but as inferences, are presented with appropriate caution: the “litanic precedents” of the *Agnus* in the *Gloria* “presumed the engagement of the assembly”; the lengthy fraction of bread (before the use of communion hosts) induced troping before each “*miserere nobis*,” and the unlikelihood “that the people would *not* engage in this constantly repeated phrase as the bread was broken and the wine poured.”⁴⁶

Foley concludes his careful essay with an affirmation of the “traditional” position: community song “seems to have been” the norm for Christian eucharist in the first centuries, but then it was taken away, not, it seems, without malintent:

With the complexification of Christian beliefs, community structures and a parallel complexification of eucharistic worship during the patristic period, musical specialists emerged: first to share musical roles with the Christian assembly, and eventually to dominate and virtually usurp these roles. . . . Increasingly . . . [the] instincts or wishes for congregational song were relegated to non-essential elements of the rites. Most elements of the proper as well as the ordinary of the Mass disallowed for congregational engagement by the end of the millennium.⁴⁷

Having exercised cautious restraint throughout his paper, Foley becomes a bit reckless in these concluding thrusts. First, as Jeffery asserts, congregational singing could

⁴⁶ *Medieval Liturgy*, 210. Italics added.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 220.

have declined in the middle ages for many reasons, having nothing to do with the music itself.⁴⁸ The gradual complexification of music similarly could be unrelated to a desire for “virtuosity.” The very perception of Gregorian chant as specialized art music – “a musical repertoire as such, recognized as superb . . . one of the most astonishing in the whole known field of music”⁴⁹ – that we as moderns (especially from the nineteenth century!) reflexively hold, may not be at all appropriate to people living in the middle ages.

The ongoing challenge is to understand how *early and medieval Christians* received chant, and more generally, what did it mean to *them* to “participate”? John Caldwell asserts that what Foley refers to above as “non-essential elements of the rites” has little meaning for the middle ages.⁵⁰ In the medieval “sacralized universe,” the continuity between liturgy and life would seem to have been significantly more real than in modernity.⁵¹ One doesn’t make a decision to “participate” in a surrounding, given Reality; one is *ipso facto* there. In any case, the notion of participation, even liturgically, is far more complex than simply the act of singing.

For medieval people worship was “mixed up” with life in a way that our more “uniformly regular” Sunday observances are not. . . . Participation stretched across a year of “feasts and commemorations,” presumed not only Sunday but a daily system

⁴⁸ Jeffery, 80-81.

⁴⁹ Gelineau, *Voices and Instruments*, 196-7.

⁵⁰ Caldwell, “Relations between Liturgical and Vernacular Music in Medieval England,” 285-6.

⁵¹ On the continuity of “God’s relation to everyday life” as expressed in medieval architecture, see R. Kevin Seasoltz, “Transcendence and Immanence in Sacred Art and Architecture,” *Worship* 75 no. 5 (September 2001) 403-431. “The gothic church symbolized that God came close to people not only to illumine their understanding but also to share the divine life and love with them From the gothic church the existential meaning of Christianity moved out to permeate the whole human environment so that the town became the place where God’s world was a living reality for the people.” *Ibid.*, 417-8.

around Sunday whether everyone always went every day or not, was “lit up” by “flashes of colour” [sic] at Mass and at irregular intervals of various feasts, and appealed to all the senses. If people did not sing at Mass, they saw the architecture, art, and pageantry, and smelled the incense in their cathedrals, then sang a carol on the way home. Whether all this made perfectly logical sense in a neat and rational package of “mind to mind” communication was not at issue as it may be for us, and participation was not reduced to the one single thing that many post-Reformation people reduce it to, namely, hymn singing.⁵²

What made up “liturgy” in the middle ages included private and domestic prayer, processions, pilgrimages, itinerant preaching, tropes and conductus, dramatic ceremonies and mystery cycles. Caldwell asserts that these “are often described as ‘paraliturgical,’ or as ‘not part of the official liturgy’ – but the distinction has little meaning for the middle ages. The Tridentine reforms created such a distinction, and it has been extrapolated back into the middle ages, where it is irrelevant.”⁵³ Similarly, there exists an as-yet-untangled relationship between chant and lay people’s song, evidenced in surviving repertories of vernacular medieval hymns, and “entire genres of vernacular song” including the German *Leisen* and *Ruf*, the Italian *lauda*, the French *lai*, and the English carol.⁵⁴ These have close ties to the chant repertory and in some cases have influenced chant in return. A small manuscript repertory of vernacular paraphrases of sequences (with musical notation)

⁵² Westermeyer, 126, following the discussion in Erik Routley, *The English Carol* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) 113-116.

⁵³ Caldwell, “Relations between Liturgical and Vernacular Music in Medieval England,” 286.

⁵⁴ Jeffery points out one medieval source, Johannes de Grocheo, writing around 1300 CE, who describes music on a continuum from “folk” to “art,” with Gregorian chant at the intersection of the two. (85). For various categories of medieval vernacular song see Ruth Ellis Messenger, “Vernacular Hymnody of the Late Middle Ages,” *The Hymn* vol. 16 no. 3 (July 1965) 80-86.

exists, whose liturgical provenance or function is undetermined.⁵⁵ Caldwell stresses the “close links that existed between popular plainchant and vernacular interpretations,” and insists “[w]e should not assume that their use in the liturgy would have been unthinkable, either in the thirteenth century or later.”⁵⁶ Thus, for example, while Thomas Cranmer’s English Litany of 1544 stands within the evolution of liturgical reforms which were to come, it also “can be interpreted as belonging to an existing tradition of vernacular aids within the liturgy . . . a response to a long-felt concern that had been addressed in a number of ways long before the advent of continental Protestantism in the sixteenth century.”⁵⁷

Recent work on the vernacular congregational hymn in the middle ages has in fact confirmed such a notion of “tradition of vernacular aids.”⁵⁸ Drawing directly from

⁵⁵ Caldwell, “Relations,” studies as an example the Nativity sequence *Letabundus exultet fidelis chorus alleluya Regem regum* and its paraphrase, both musical and vernacular, *Glad and blithe*. Martin Luther was to seize on the tradition of the “Sequence principle” as “homiletic commentary, in musical form, on the primary teaching of the day or celebration,” in his development of the congregational hymn between Epistle and Gospel. This tradition has survived for centuries in Lutheranism as the “hymn of the day,” and originally gave rise to two great Lutheran genres, the *Spruchmotette* and the cantata. See Robin A. Leaver, “Sequences and Responsories: Continuity of Forms in Luther’s Liturgical Provisions,” in Karin Maag and John D. Witvliet, *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004) 300-328, here 320.

⁵⁶ Caldwell, 290-1. He cites a refrain-setting of the *Te Deum* by Thomas Packe, which is a mixture of Latin and English, plainchant monophony, fauxbourdon, and polyphony. It “doubtless illustrates an attempt to bring home the text to provincial people . . . in a vivid way. Again, one wonders whether such a concoction could have been used in the normal liturgical position of the *Te Deum*, perhaps on some great feast and after a liturgical play.” Ibid., 291.

⁵⁷ Caldwell, 292.

⁵⁸ The most important and thorough recent research is Anthony Ruff, OSB, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations* (Chicago/Mundelein, IL: Hillenbrand Books/Liturgy Training Publications, 2007), esp. 563-602. See also Ruff, “A Millennium of Congregational Song,” *Pastoral Music* 21 no. 3 (February-March 1997) 11-15; Messenger, “Vernacular Hymnody of the Late Middle Ages”; Rev. Francis Hajtas, “The Vernacular Religious Songs in Hungary Since 1932,” *CEC* 85 no. 2 (Spring 1958) 174-6; Rev. Karl Weinmann, *History of Church Music: An Outline History of Catholic Church Music from its Origins to the Motu Proprio of Pope Pius X – 1903* (Boston: McLaughlin & Reilly, 1906) 50-58.

liturgical sources, Anthony Ruff notes that medieval hymnody was “[i]n many cases . . . a direct translation of a Latin liturgical text and intended to be sung to a variant of the Latin chant melody. One can rightly speak of vernacular strophic hymnody as being born in the womb of the medieval liturgy.”⁵⁹ From the ninth century, Latin office hymns were translated into German, and original compositions (“*leisen*”) emerged from the ubiquitous (liturgical and extra-liturgical) exclamation “*Kyrie eleison*.” Latin processional hymns were regularly translated, with various *Ordines* showing *alternatim* singing between clergy and people.⁶⁰ From the eleventh century German translations of sequences appear, which Ruff asserts “were probably also sung in connection with the Latin sequence at Mass.”⁶¹ Sequences became the “springboard for the development of hymns in the vernacular in most countries,”⁶² Weinmann citing one collection alone of almost fifteen hundred pre-Reformation vernacular hymns.⁶³

Evidence of actual “liturgical” usage is less assured, but reasonable inferences can be made for a variety of uses during and surrounding the mass itself, including processions (“does Mass begin when the Introit is intoned or when the worshipers gather and begin

⁵⁹ Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 574.

⁶⁰ Ruff cites “Gloria, Laus, et Honor” for Palm Sunday, and “Salve Festa Dies” for Easter Sunday (ibid., 570).

⁶¹ Ibid., 569.

⁶² Nemmers, *Twenty Centuries of Catholic Church Music*, 72. Weinmann lists for example “Kum sanfer Trost, Heiliger Geist” (*Veni, sancte Spiritus*) and “Lob o Sion, deinen Hailer” (*Lauda Sion salvatorem*) of the “monk of Salzburg.” (55) “Christ ist Erstanden” (for *Victimae paschali laudes*) undoubtedly was the most widespread, Ruff noting its presence “in hundreds of medieval manuscripts in Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Dutch, various dialects of German, and Latin. It was often sung as part of a liturgical drama near the end of Matins.” Ruff, *Treasures*, 569.

⁶³ Viz., Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts*. (Stuttgart: S. G. Liesching, 1841), in Weinmann, 57.

singing together.”)⁶⁴ Prohibitions during the middle ages against vernacular singing at the *Gloria*, *Credo*, offertory, preface, or Lord’s Prayer, for example, suggest common practice.⁶⁵ Documents recently found show that Cistercian nuns in Medingen, at times along with lay people in attendance, “sang German hymns as *Gloria tropes*, at the Elevation, before Communion, during the Communion Procession, as well as in processions at the beginning or end of liturgies.”⁶⁶ Patterns of participation which lived on after the Reformation are considered strong evidence of earlier usage,⁶⁷ both Luther and Melancthon attributing some repertory and practices to “former times.”⁶⁸ Josef Gülden offers a striking summary of congregational song in pre-Reformation Germany:

Thus in eastern as in southern, in northern as well as western Germany, around the year 1500 everyone sang German hymns and songs at the high mass – both before and after mass, and in fact in various places during: at the *Gloria*, during and after the Epistle, at the Sequence, before and after the sermon, at the Creed, the Offertory and Preface, after the Elevation and at the Our Father.”⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 574.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 572.

⁶⁶ Ibid., citing Walther Lipphardt, “Die liturgische Funktion deutscher Kirchenlieder in den Klöstern niedersächsischer Zisterzienserinnen des Mittelalters” (“The Liturgical Function of German Hymns in the Monasteries of Cisterian [sic] Nuns of Lower Saxony in the Middle Age”), *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 94 (1972) 158-198.

⁶⁷ Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 571-2, citing Jungmann, *MRR I*, 146-7.

⁶⁸ Weinmann, 58; Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 571.

⁶⁹ “Im Osten wie im Süden, im Norden wie im Westen Deutschlands sang man also tatsächlich um 1500, auch vorher und nachher, . . . zum Hochamt deutsche Lieder und Gesänge, und zwar an verschiedenen Stellen: zum *Gloria*, während und nach der Epistel, zur Sequenz, vor und nach der Predigt, zum *Credo*, zum *Offertorium* [sic], zur Präfation, nach der Elevation und zum *Pater noster* Josef Gülden, *Johann Leisentrits Bautzener Meßritus und Meßgesänge* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1964) 59 (my translation); cited in Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 572.

Bradford Bedingfield highlights an aspect of medieval lay participation in a study of the dramatic aspects of medieval English liturgy, where rite and drama commingled, and the people indeed took an active musical and dramatic role. Bedingfield studies the liturgies for Tenebrae, Palm Sunday, Candlemas, and Easter, and finds “the emphasis on enhancing aspects of the liturgy that encourage involvement *by connecting participants with those experiencing the original event* is paramount.”⁷⁰ This connection with the original events is accomplished, he argues, through a variety of dramatic/ritual means, such as receiving a candle at Candlemas, and on Palm Sunday particularly through the music in which the people join. In the Palm Sunday liturgy,⁷¹ processions between two churches are accompanied by the singing of the hymn *Gloria laus et honor tibi* and other antiphons (“Hosanna in the highest”), children are sent ahead to the mother church to welcome the procession by singing, “Who is this king of glory?,” and all enter singing the antiphon *Ingrediente Domino*.

The liturgical participants are to think of themselves here as one with those following behind Christ, carrying palms as totems of victory over the devil and singing Hosannah, as did the original crowd. This is the heart of the Anglo-Saxon Palm Sunday ritual, this juxtaposition of the participants with the crowd, *effected by singing the same song*. . . . It is when this connection is made between the congregation and the role that is being highlighted for them (that of the townpeople singing the song) that the commemoration becomes a dramatic one.⁷²

⁷⁰ M. Bradford Bedingfield, “Ritual and Drama in Anglo-Saxon England: the Dangers of the Diachronic Perspective,” in Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield, eds., *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2005) 291-317, here 308. Italics added.

⁷¹ Described in Bedingfield, 308-311.

⁷² Bedingfield, 310-311. Italics added. The paradigmatic instance of this trans-worldly participation is of course the singing of the *Sanctus*.

Bedingfield's point is that the reception of medieval liturgy in its dramatic (including musical) aspects should be judged neither by secular nor diachronic views; the intent (strongly attested in extant vernacular preaching texts) was the "participatory appreciation" by the people of the relevant biblical story. If we "ignore historical, cultural, and liturgical contexts [we] assume a continuity in dramatic aesthetics [and presumably musical and participative experience] that cannot be supported."⁷³

Pius X of course faced an entirely different world centuries later; yet it was this same "participatory appreciation" in the Christian story that he sought for the faithful, again through the liturgy and liturgical song. (His own fondness for staging elaborate festivals and processions may hark back to the participative world of medieval liturgies and drama.) But in the meantime, the medieval synthesis unraveled under the forces of humanism and the Reformation, the beginnings of the modern world. As the Catholic church sought to respond in the Council of Trent, a liturgical agenda eventuated which the first pope of the twentieth century would attempt to complete.

⁷³ Ibid., 315. Caldwell echoes the same caution: "One of the effects of the Reformation in England (and doubtless elsewhere) was to create a mythology about the pre-Reformation liturgy according to which it was by virtue of its language and musical adornment incomprehensible to and remote from ordinary people. This of course was far from being the case: the liturgy was not always clothed in elaborate music, or indeed in any music, and some of it, addressed primarily to the laity, had traditionally been in the vernacular: the dictation of the marriage vows, the Great Cursing, the Sunday bidding prayer, and above all the homily or sermon. In any case, a good deal of trouble was expended in bringing home the Christian message through visual means: painted glass and walls, carved stone and wood, ceremony and drama." Caldwell, 285.

2.2 Council of Trent

“Cautious ambiguity.”
- Thomas Day⁷⁴

By the early sixteenth century, the cohesion of the medieval world-view, in which sacred experience and meaning were grasped through physical and ritual means, had been unraveling for some time. The Roman Catholic church faced a crisis born in the growth of Renaissance humanism and starkly eventuating in the Protestant Reformation. Deep theological challenges found their targets particularly in liturgical “abuses,” including the musical practices of the church. The growth of polyphony from the 10th century had led to increasing complexity in liturgical music, finding expression in the items of the proper, in the motet, and finally to the group of texts most favored by composers, the ordinary of the mass. As Dufay, Okeghem, and Josquin penned their early masses, their works struggled into the growing headwind of a “cultural ethos dedicated to the cultivation of the word,”⁷⁵ Erasmus complaining that “In college or monastery it is still the same: music, nothing but music. There was no music in St. Paul’s time. Words were then pronounced plainly. Words nowadays mean nothing.”⁷⁶

St. Paul says that he would rather speak five words with a reasonable meaning in them than ten thousand in an unknown tongue. . . .
Modern church music is so constructed that the congregation cannot

⁷⁴ Thomas Day, “Twentieth-century church music: an elusive modernity,” *Communio* 6 no. 3 (Fall 1979) 237.

⁷⁵ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1985), 161.

⁷⁶ Elwyn A. Wienandt, *Opinions on Church Music: Comments and reports from four-and-a-half centuries* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, Markham Fund, 1984, c.1974) 3.

hear one distinct word. The choristers themselves do not understand what they are singing, yet according to priests and monks it constitutes the whole of religion.⁷⁷

Today John Bossy defends Renaissance polyphony as an “audible symbol of plurality in unity,”⁷⁸ but in that day the Hussites (among many others) saw it the other way around, decrying the mass as a “cacophony of self-absorbed voices giving audible witness to the disintegrated state of Christendom.”⁷⁹

Worship music, therefore, in which the *people* could participate became an (almost) universal aim of Protestant liturgical reforms,⁸⁰ resting on the newly-appropriated Bible as warrant. A century before Luther, Jan Hus (c.1369-1415) had translated the Latin Vulgate into the Czech language, and was struck by certain psalmic phrases such as “O come, let us sing unto the Lord” (Ps. 95:1) and “O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth.” (Ps. 96) For Hus,

⁷⁷ Wienandt, *Opinions on Church Music*, 3.

⁷⁸ Bossy, 164.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 165. Descriptive complaints of textual torture from the period abound, e.g.: “Today all musicians place their beatitude in forcing the singing into the fugal form, so that one singer says *Sanctus*, another says, *Sabaoth*, and the third *Gloria tua* with shouts and groans and garglings, so that they seem more like cats in January than flowers in May.” Bishop Cirillo Franco, letter of 1549, quoted in Karl Gustav Fellerer, “Church Music and the Council of Trent.” *The Musical Quarterly* 39 (1953) 576-594, here 583 n.28. Fellerer notes the “wilful [sic] interpolation” in mass settings of “*farciturae* as liturgical tropes or secular texts. Particularly rich in such interpolations are Masses for saints as well as Masses of dedication or of homage.” (Ibid., 582 n. 21) Palestrina himself, in his masses *Ecce sacerdos* and *Veni Creator spiritus*, “retained the liturgical text of the title in the *cantus firmus* voice, while the remaining voices declaimed the text of the Mass polyphonically.” (Ibid.)

⁸⁰ As is well known, the most accomplished musician of the major reformers, Huldrych Zwingli, was the exception to the rule, interpreting the biblical injunctions to “sing with the spirit” to mean silent inward contemplation. A good summary of this general topic is found in Robin A. Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song I: Hymnody in Reformation Churches,” in Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman, eds., *Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) 281-307.

“All the earth” includes all tongues and all the people, not just the priests. . . . “Sing unto the Lord a new song” [meant] not only the old ones, and it may be in a new tongue besides Hebrew, Greek and Latin. God understands all languages.⁸¹

The Bohemian pastor thus introduced vernacular hymn singing into his parish church (seating three thousand) a full century before the events in Wittenberg, and prior to his condemnation and execution as a heretic in 1415. For Luther, of course, congregational singing was predicated on the theology of the priesthood of all believers; but he intended also to be recapturing the practice of the early church. Music in Luther’s view was a great gift of God, coming from “the *auricularia*, i.e., from the sphere of miraculous audible things,”⁸² and thus had sacramental potential: it could bear the Word of God, it could enable proclamation by means of praise, and it could give voice to the exuberant response of God’s redeemed people. In the *Deutsche Messe* of 1526, the faithful were re-incorporated into the singing of the “*mass*” itself by means of the traditional parts of the ordinary, now recast as congregational hymns.⁸³ Unwilling to abandon the element of artistry in the church’s music, Luther insisted however that it be ratified by a cognitive process, by intelligibility.

When learning is added to this and artistic music which corrects, develops, and refines the natural music, then at last it is possible to

⁸¹ Andrew P. Slabey, “John Hus and Congregational Singing,” *The Hymn* 16 (July 1965) 69-74, 87, here 69.

⁸² Oskar Soehngen, quoted in Westermeyer, *Te Deum*, 144. The discussion here summarizes Westermeyer, 142-9.

⁸³ The 1526 Order did not include a vernacular *Gloria*, which was only added later in practice. In subsequent development, the customary sequence of “ordinary” hymns became: Kyrie, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit (*Kyrie*), Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr (*Gloria*), Wir glauben all an einen Gott (*Credo*), Jesaja dem Propheten das geschah (*Sanctus*), Christe, du Lamm Gottes or O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig (*Agnus Dei*). Leaver, “Liturgical Music as Corporate Song,” 284.

taste with wonder (yet not comprehend) God's absolute and perfect wisdom in his wondrous work of music.⁸⁴

Calvin too, though ambivalent at first, saw the necessity of returning song to the people on patristic grounds: "[T]his is not something invented a little time ago. For from the first origin of the Church, this has been so, as appears from the histories."⁸⁵ The early church sang psalms, and thus it would be in Calvin's liturgy, in his "great vision of the whole life of the ancient church."

Psalmody was an *apostolic* practice, a fact of profound importance for Calvin, underscored by his reference to the degeneration of contemporary liturgical music. . . . Consequently the psalms were to be returned to the people, to whom they once belonged, to be sung by them in their own tongue, as once they had been, with understanding in the form of "true spiritual songs."⁸⁶

For Calvin singing was actually a mode of prayer, one of two types of prayer: "with words alone" and "with singing." As such it was critical that singing, like all worship, not be "mechanical" or ritualistic, but rather an expression of the *sincerity* of the believer's faith, coming "from the heart."⁸⁷ Here the necessary element of intelligibility arises again, for "[a]fter centuries of abuse by the papacy not even the priests understood what they were

⁸⁴ "Preface to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae iucundae*," *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960ff.) v. 53, p. 324; cited in Westermeyer, 145.

⁸⁵ From the Preface to the Genevan Psalter of 1542, cited in Charles Garside, Jr., "Calvin's Preface to the Psalter: A Re-appraisal." *The Musical Quarterly* 37 (October 1951) 566-577, here 568.

⁸⁶ Charles Garside, Jr., "The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536-1543." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 69, Part 4 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979) 10.

⁸⁷ In the 1536 *Institutes*, Calvin asserts: "it is fully evident that unless voice and song, if interposed in prayer, spring from deep feeling of heart, neither has any value or profit in the least with God." *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 74. Cited in John D. Witvliet, "The Spirituality of the Psalter: Metrical Psalms in Liturgy and Life in Calvin's Geneva." *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (1997) 273-297, here 282 n.46.

singing.”⁸⁸ Thus Calvin’s critique of the church’s musical practice centered in three areas: (1) the papacy had removed the *participatory* nature of singing; (2) it had removed *intelligibility*; (3) it had strayed from patristic precedent. (Over three centuries later, the papacy, in the person of Pius X, would agree on the substance of these three issues in *TLS*!) What became clear for Calvin (as it did eventually for Zwingli’s followers) was that worship without music – as *pars integrans*! – lacked a fundamental dimension.

Paul himself . . . says it is good to sing in the congregation with mouth and heart. We are unable to compute the profit and edification which will arise from this except after having experimented. Certainly as things are, the prayers of the faithful are so cold, that we ought to be ashamed and dismayed. The psalms can incite us to lift up our hearts to God and move us to an ardour in invoking and exalting with praises the glory of his Name.⁸⁹

By the time of the 1542 Genevan Psalter, Calvin was able to reflect that “in truth, we know by experience that singing has great force and vigor to move and inflame the hearts of men and to invoke and praise God with a more vehement and ardent zeal.”⁹⁰

We can see that the question of participation for these reformers was driven both theologically (where for Luther, it signified the priesthood of all the baptized, or for Calvin, it marked the inner reception of faith), and by the humanist goal of intelligibility. Clifford Howell, SJ, puts it that the reformers based their challenges on two “fundamental defects”

⁸⁸ Garside, “Origins,” 10.

⁸⁹ “Articles concernant l’organisation de l’église,” in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. J. K. S. Reid, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954) 53. Cited in Witvliet, “The Spirituality of the Psalter,” 282.

⁹⁰ From the Preface to the Genevan Psalter of 1542, cited in Garside, Jr., “Calvin’s Preface to the Psalter: A Re-appraisal,” 568.

in Catholic liturgy: unintelligibility and the exclusion of the laity.⁹¹ But Howell also notes that insofar as it did not wish to appear to be “pandering to heresy,” the church’s hands were somewhat tied in responding. Similarly, as with sacramental controversies, Nathan Mitchell observes that while the Reformers raised serious *historical* and *theological* questions, the Council of Trent’s concern was often with authority: “What discretionary power does the Church have over sacraments and worship?”⁹² Yet the council did not ignore the participatory challenge, and as Mitchell notes elsewhere, “Trent conceded a major point of the ‘revolutionary’ ritual theory espoused by many Protestant reformers, *viz.*, that *cognition* – *intelligent understanding* – is key to lay participation in the liturgy.”⁹³ This was effected in the Council decree that pastors or others

explain frequently during the celebration of the mass some of the things read during the mass, and that among other things they explain some mystery of this most holy sacrifice, especially on Sundays and festival days.⁹⁴

And it must not be thought that the concerns which fueled Protestant musical thought were otherwise absent in the Roman church. Henry Chadwick notes,

⁹¹ Howell, “From Trent to Vatican II,” 287.

⁹² Nathan Mitchell, “Reforms, Protestant and Catholic,” in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 307-350, here 336.

⁹³ Nathan Mitchell, “Crossing the Visible” (The Amen Corner), *Worship* 79 no. 6 (November 2005) 555-566, here 557. Italics edited.

⁹⁴ From the 22nd Session, Chapter VIII. *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* trans. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1960. Reprint of 1941 edition) 148. The council also pressed the “preaching of the Gospel” at least every week, in order to “feed the people committed to them with wholesome words in proportion to their own and their people’s mental capacity . . . teaching them those things that are necessary for all to know in order to be saved.” (Session 5, Chapter II), as well as sacramental and catechetical instruction “in the vernacular tongue.” (Session 24, Chapter VII).

Both the Council of Trent and the sixteenth century Reformers speak with a single voice on their fear of music in Church which is either so elaborate as wholly to obscure the meaning of the liturgy or so secular that it is associated with the amorous songs of the theatre.⁹⁵

Indeed strands of intense Catholic discontent over music run through the Reformation period, centering around two related issues: the *purity*⁹⁶ and *intelligibility* of church music.

Musical antics at mass apparently even reached the point of disruptive comedy:

Some will compose a Mass upon a madrigal or a French song or upon a battle, and when such compositions are heard in the Church they induce everyone to laugh, whereby the temple of God becomes a place to recite lascivious and ludicrous things, as if it were a stage where it is permissible to render every sort of music of ridiculous buffoonery and lasciviousness.⁹⁷

The issue of musical abuses became so urgent that it was included (among many acute matters of discipline and morals) in the preparatory talks leading up to Trent, and on the Council agenda itself (in the 22nd, 23rd and 24th sessions).

⁹⁵ Chadwick, "Why Music in Church?" 211. Luther may be an exception to this group.

⁹⁶ One of many citations provided by Fellerer: "Not content with these things, we have introduced a laborious and theatrical kind of music into our sacred edifices, a tumultuous bawl of diverse voices, such as I do not believe was ever heard in the theaters of the Greeks or the Romans. They crash everything out with trumpets, clarions, reeds, and sambukes, and human voices vie with these instruments. There are heard vile love ditties, to which harlots and mimes dance. People flock to the sacred edifice as to a theater to have their ears charmed. And for this purpose artisans of the organ are maintained at high salaries, and troops of boys all of whose time is consumed in learning these things, and who study nothing good in the meanwhile." Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Commentary on Corinthians 14*, in Fellerer, "Church Music and the Council of Trent," 585-6, n. 42. The Catholic response centering on purity and intelligibility is noted by Frank C. Quinn, O.P., "Liturgical Music as Corporate Song 2: Problems of Hymnody in Catholic Worship," in Leaver and Zimmerman, *Liturgy and Music*, 311.

⁹⁷ Nicolo Vicentino, *L'antica musica ridotta alla moderna pratica* (Rome, 1555), quoted in Fellerer, "Church Music and the Council of Trent," 582, n. 20.

The actual mandate of the Council of Trent for the reform of the liturgy was delayed until the 25th and final session of the Council (December 4, 1563). At that time liturgical matters were turned over to the papacy, and the resulting reform (under a commission appointed to the task)⁹⁸ issued most importantly in the publication of a new Breviary (1568) and new Missal (1570), now mandated for universal usage. Because of this delay and eventual remanding of liturgical reform, one notable point of view maintains that, despite the rancor and bitter polemic in many quarters in the sixteenth century over the liturgy, liturgical reform at Trent remained a “marginal” issue: “in the overall plan of the Council of Trent . . . it was regarded as of secondary interest and so ended up as one of the problems the Council left untouched.”⁹⁹ A different perspective might emphasize that the Council had no shortage of theological, pastoral, and disciplinary crises to address, this in the midst of disrupted and sometimes dangerous circumstances. And in any event, the urgent gravity of the Reformers’ challenges, centering on the very nature of sin, grace, and redemption, not only had largely sprung from liturgical practices but carried liturgical consequences – consequences which would prove immediate, serious, even violent.

The point to be made here is that Trent addressed liturgical *music* in a very different way than it did liturgy *generally*. As we shall see below, the approach to music

⁹⁸ This commission was established by Pius IV on August 2, 1564 with the *motu proprio* “*Alias nonnullas constitutiones*” (Robertson, 97). Hayburn’s account is that it consisted of eight cardinals (among them Charles Borromeo), who as one of their first measures dismissed fourteen members of the Sistine choir; see Franz Xavier Haberl, “Die Cardinalscommission von 1564 und Palestrina’s Missa Papae Marcelli,” *Kirchenmusicalisches Jahrbuch* vol. 7 (1892) 86, and Hayburn, 29-30.

⁹⁹ Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*, tr. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) 37. Hence, says Bugnini, a “marginal” problem at Trent “had become the number one problem at Vatican II” (*ibid.*, 38).

remained “cautious and ambiguous” in Thomas Day’s phrase, as opposed to the very clear turn toward a new centrist authoritarianism that took place in liturgy generally. For in the matter of Catholic worship, à la Charlemagne and Gregory VII, Pius V desired a universal conformity. The state of liturgical codices and practices before Trent was unquestionably discordant and chaotic, displaying, in Klauser’s words, an “immense number of abuses.” Pius’ urge toward uniformity was famously stated in the bull *Quo primum*: “To one God, with one and the same formula, let prayers and praise be addressed.”¹⁰⁰ The commission which Pius (+1572) and his successors, Clement VIII (+1605) and Paul V (+1621), empowered to study and reform the liturgy, addressed the task following two central principles:¹⁰¹

- 1) “*early is good*”: following principles of Renaissance humanism, they sought to clear away the “rubbish” of accretions and restore the liturgy to the time of Gregory VII (+1085): “*ad pristinam sanctorum Patrum normam ac ritum restituerunt.*”
- 2) Secondly, “*Rome is universal*”: the liturgy of the City of Rome was held to be valid for the universal church (with the exception granted to liturgies two hundred years of age or older.)¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ For the Latin text of *Quo primum*, see *Missale Romanum, Editio Princeps (1570)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998) 3-4. Until 1970 this bull was printed in the front of all editions of the Roman missal.

¹⁰¹ The discussion here follows Klauser. Nathan Mitchell adduces five principles overall which were actually operative: 1. A single rite for Mass and Office to be used throughout the Latin Church. 2. Scholarship would be used to authenticate the “antiquity, quality and accuracy” of the new Missal. 3. Mass would be restored to the “pristine norm of the ancient fathers.” 4. As the papacy approves and promulgates the *editiones typicae*, it also has the authority of interpreting liturgical norms. 5. Only by papal decree could the Missal be amended, whether in rites or rubrics. (“From Trent to the Liturgical Movement,” in *Today’s Liturgy*, Advent – Epiphany 2003, p. 7-12, here p.8).

¹⁰² Michael Driscoll has termed these two principles the “myth of the Golden Age” and the “myth of the pure Roman liturgy.” The Tridentine invocation and search for a “golden age,” or a “pristine norm of the holy fathers,” reveals that humanism and certainly the Protestant critiques had hit home in the Roman church. Among the many confounding ironies of liturgiology is that this very “pruning away of accretions” in favor of an earlier “pristine” liturgy was the animating method of the reforms of Vatican II, a method

With the publication of the *Breviarum Romanum* and the *Missale Romanum* (and later the 1596 *Pontificale Romanum* and the 1614 *Rituale Romanum*), the emphasis, as Klauser notes, was on the *Romanum*. The machinery of centralization, rigidity, and rubricization was further constructed with the founding of the Sacred Congregation for Rites in 1588. The Curia could now exert the “exclusive right of liturgical jurisdiction” (which they had claimed in name since the time of Gregory VII), and the “period of episcopal independence in liturgical matters which stretches right back to the early Church was thereby in principle and then also in practice brought to an end.”¹⁰³

The approach to music regulation at Trent, however, took a remarkably different path. In the decades before Trent, there existed not only the perennial complaints about music within the Catholic milieu (profane sources, overpowering volume, unintelligible text, careless and irreverent performance), but also the daunting challenge from the new and evolving Protestant bodies which used popular hymnody to such great proselytizing and catechetical effect. Initially, the musical concerns from various Catholic provincial councils prior to Trent were reflected in a report compiled by Frid.¹⁰⁴ Nausea Blancicampianus, Bishop of Vienne, and given to Pope Paul III as a basis for discussion

assailed in our own time by those (among them Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) seeking a *return* to Tridentine ritualism! See John F. Baldwin, “The Uses of Liturgical History,” *Worship* 82 no. 1 (January 2008) 10-18.

¹⁰³ Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western liturgy*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford, New York, et al.: Oxford University Press, 1979), 118.

¹⁰⁴ (sic = Frideric?) Hayburn, 25.

two years before the start of the Council (in June 1543). In this early report, essentially four problem areas were raised:¹⁰⁵

1. The problem of achieving unity with Protestantism in view of the doctrinal power of their hymnody (which contains “a certain envy and levity.” In the early years of the Council, rapprochement/re-integration with Protestants was still being entertained.)
2. Source of liturgical texts: must be from, in accord with, or not disagreeing with, Sacred Scripture. In whatever language (!), texts must be “serious in tone without exciting laughter.”
3. Performance problems in chanting the Divine Office by cathedral canons:
 - a. Unskilled in music
 - b. Careless use of uncorrected Missals and Breviaries
 - c. Careless use of the voice (“a shout or a love-cry”);
omission of liturgical texts in favor of organ or singing
 - d. Reverent and attentive performance of Choir duties
 - e. Songs (including vernacular) and organ music which “arouse wantonness rather than piety”
4. “Texts, and the “order and time” of music, which must be “worthy and fitting” for the praise of God.

It was almost twenty years before the Council, in the last of its four interrupted gatherings, was able to take up these matters regarding music. Prior to the final sessions, preliminary committee discussions took place (in August of 1562), which again revolved around long-standing complaints; but this time they seemed to be narrowing their sights to abuses found especially in *polyphony*:

1. The *lascivious nature* of polyphonic music: delighting the ear more than the mind; not prompting “religious” thought; masking profane content.
2. The need for “the words [to be] *more intelligible* than the modulations of the music.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Discussion from Hayburn, 26-7.

¹⁰⁶ Florentius Romita, *Jus musicae liturgicae* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1947) 59. Hayburn, 27.

As Bossy asserts, Trent's conception of the "sacred" in music was becoming "purely textual."¹⁰⁷ Indeed the tenor of the times seemed to be leaning toward an absolute ban on polyphony, said style being guilty of the twin sins of "sensuality" of sound *and* contrapuntal confounding of text. "Scandalous noises," averred Cardinals Morone and Navagero, who pressed for monophonic music only at Mass.¹⁰⁸ Both during and after the Council was formally over, there would be some politicking and persuasion at Cardinals' residences over this issue. But for the moment, something had to be done, and into the breach stepped Otto Cardinal Truchsess of Augsburg. The *Preces speciales*¹⁰⁹ commissioned from his choirmaster, the Franco-flemish Jacobus de Kerle, were sung during council sessions at the processions of the Cardinals; they helped create a favorable enough impression of a "reformed" polyphony (a so-called "Tridentine style") to forestall banishment.¹¹⁰ The survival of polyphony was undoubtedly aided as well by the written intervention of the Emperor Ferdinand I of Spain in the following summer of 1563;¹¹¹ this was the "golden age" of Spanish polyphony (Cristobal de Morales, Francisco Guerrero, Juan Navarro,

¹⁰⁷ Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 166.

¹⁰⁸ Hayburn, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Full title = *Preces speciales pro salubri generalis concilii successu*. Discussion here follows Hugo Leichtentritt, "The Reform of Trent and Its Effect on Music," *The Musical Quarterly* 30 no. 1 (January 1944) 319-328.

¹¹⁰ Vincenzo Ruffo included on the title-pages of his 1580 Masses "*novamente composto seconda la forma del Concilio Tridentino*." To forestall further threats to polyphony, this style of composition, a coupling of homophonic and polyphonic techniques which kept the text eminently clear, was hastily developed and modelled during the later council years, including compositions by Animuccia, Orlando di Lasso, Rosselli, Ruffo, Matteo Asola, Biagio Pesciolini, de Kerle, and Palestrina (the *Missa Papae Marcelli*, according to legend.) Interestingly, however, these composers did not feel bound by the "Tridentine style"; Palestrina himself went back to writing contrapuntally and parodies on secular themes, if requested.

¹¹¹ Hayburn, 28.

Antonio de Cabezón, and the young master Tomás Luis de Vittoria), and “we believe that so divine a gift as music can frequently stir to devotion the souls of men . . . This music must never be banned from our churches.”¹¹²

At the end of the day, Trent included *nothing* about music within the body of its Canons, strictly speaking.¹¹³ The mention of music does occur four times within the general decrees, usually in the context of other matters; and these references, as Wienandt

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Following Wienandt, 12-13. It was not that music discussions had not occurred. Hayburn tells of the following: A committee of deputies drew up a proposal concerning music as part of Canon 8, “concerning the abuses for those celebrating or hearing Mass.” Two somewhat lengthy paragraphs were approved on September 10, 1562 (see Hayburn, 27) whose main points are summarized here:

1. Worship should be fitting and decorous, “performed with the greatest veneration.”
2. Priests celebrating Masses should speak slowly and distinctly, in order to be understood and to arouse piety.
3. Priests should speak in a moderate volume: loud enough to be understood, not so loud as to destroy devotion.
4. Mass should be “tranquil”: clearly sung or spoken; not “running a fast course.”
5. Nothing profane in voice or organ, but only “hymns and divine praises.”
6. Sung texts should be read aloud first, for comprehension.
7. Music should first of all serve the clear delivery of text, not the “empty pleasure of the ear.” Purpose is to draw hearts to sacred realities.
8. Liturgical services should not be abbreviated at will.

One week later, the council adopted the following as a summation of the above (Hayburn, 28):

So that the house of God should truly appear to be rightly called a house of prayer, compositions in which there is an intermingling of the lascivious or impure, whether by instrument or voice, and likewise every secular action, idle and even profane conversation, strolling about, bustle, and shouting must be ousted from the churches.

1. They [the Bishops and Ordinaries] shall also keep from the churches all those kinds of music, in which, whether by the organ, or in the singing, there is mixed up anything lascivious or impure; as also all secular actions; vain and therefore profane conversations, all walking about, noise and clamour; that so the house of God may truly seem to be, and may be called, a *house of prayer*. (Mt 21.13)

asserts, are “often misunderstood and equally often exaggerated.”¹¹⁴ For the sake of clarity, the four passages pertaining to music are given together here, immediately below; my own brief commentary follows.

2.2.1 Trent on Music:¹¹⁵

1. The Bishops and Ordinaries must prevent the use in Church of any music which has a sensuous or impure character, and this, whether such music be for the organ or for the voice, in order that the House of God may appear and may be in truth, the House of Prayer.
[Session XXII, September 22, 1562]
2. In order to improve the education and ecclesiastical formation of students in the Seminaries, these students must receive the tonsure and wear the clerical habit; to their other studies they must add the study of literature, *the chant*, the computation of the ecclesiastical year, and the fine arts.
[Session XXIII: July 15, 1563. Chapter 18: *Reform.*]
3. All Canons are obliged to say the divine Office personally and not through a substitute; to assist the Bishop when he celebrates and pontificates; and to sing the praises of God in hymns and psalms in the Choir which has been organized for this purpose, and to do so with clearness and devotion.
[Session XXIV: November 11, 1563. Chapter 12: *Reform.*]
4. All other matters which concern the divine Office, the proper way of singing, the reunion of choirs and their right order and discipline . . . will be settled by the provincial Synod, which will prescribe for each province regulations which meet local needs and customs. For the moment, the Bishop assisted by at least two Canons, one of whom will be named by the Bishop and the other by the Chapter, will make the necessary decisions on matters that are most urgent.
[Ibid.]

¹¹⁴ Wienandt, 12.

¹¹⁵ Rt. Rev. Abbott Paul M. Ferretti, OSB, *Papal Documents on Sacred Music* (New York: Society of St. Gregory in America, 1939) 3-4.

My commentary which follows attempts to bring out facets of the Tridentine acts which eventually became issues taken up by TLS:

- Following the tenor of much of the reform, we note that two of the three Tridentine “acts” concerning music focus on the clergy: #2 looks to seminary education in the chant (but considers that it is somewhat “additional,” on the level with literature and fine arts). #3 insists on the cathedral canons performing their sung office daily in choir; this is a disciplinary matter really more than music, and sits amid a great number of Tridentine disciplinary concerns over the clergy.
- #1 is the only act which explicitly talks about music per se, and as Fellerer says, Trent kept its musical discussion at the level of “fundamental attitudes.” After all the preliminary debate,¹¹⁶ the only critique that makes the “final cut” is the time-honored “lascivious - sensuous - impure” category. It is yet to be negotiated (in the Imperial discussions in the summer of 1563 and the soirées at Cardinal Vitellozzi’s house) whether “lascivious” is to mean “polyphonic.”
- Issues of *active lay participation* in the music do not exist; where participation is an issue, it concerns the clergy.
- In contrast, the concern for the laity (expressed in #1) is over how “sensuous” music will affect them. This is in keeping with the oft-stated reference to the “edification of the faithful” at the Council, and the worries over how liturgical abuses are impacting the faithful: superstition is to be rooted out; the Mass is to be explained (weekly!)
- It is assumed, however, that Music is a constitutive part of liturgy. It functions in somewhat the same way as religious images do, which act upon people and are thusly defended: “. . . by means of the stories of the mysteries of our redemption portrayed in paintings and other representations the people are instructed and confirmed in the articles of faith, which ought to be borne in mind and constantly reflected upon; . . . and [may] be moved to adore and love God and cultivate piety.”¹¹⁷
- Conspicuous by its absence is the emphasis on clarity and intelligibility in the musical handling of text.

¹¹⁶ See note 97 above.

¹¹⁷ Council of Trent, Twenty-fifth Session: “On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images.” Schroeder, 216.

- By far, the most stunning in this collection of musical texts is #4, from the penultimate session in November 1563. This act reflects the influence of the Emperor's intervention the previous summer; and far from the centralizing moves of the Cardinals' liturgical commission, it essentially decentralizes musical control.

Following the Council, the matter of liturgical books showed further fundamental differences between liturgical reform, generally, and that of music. If the new *Breviarum* and *Missale* followed the major premise that “early is good,” the “reform” of the chant books did anything but. In one of the great conundrums of church music history, none less than Palestrina took his hand to “the greatest artistic legacy of the middle ages,” and began the process (carried through by Anerio and Soriano after Palestrina's death) which, following humanist textual ideals, radically disfigured Gregorian chant. Whereas the humanist impulse toward clean and clear forms drove the reformers of Missal and Breviary back to “early” sources, in the case of the chant books it led them to truncate, abbreviate and mutilate (in the name of “modernity”) the early sources of chant¹¹⁸ (while doing away with accretions such as sequences.)¹¹⁹ Further, the resulting “Medicean Edition” of the *Graduale Romanum* (1614-15) was in no sense an *editio typica* imposed for universal usage, as were the *Breviarum* and *Missale* (though not the *Rituale*). Several other editions of chant books were privately produced soon after Trent, some becoming widely used (unfortunately popular because of a similar shortening of chant, as with the Guidetti edition of 1582) and

¹¹⁸ Gregory XIII, in handing over the music reform to Palestrina and Annibale Zoilo, requested the cleaning up in chant, in the well-known phrase, of “barbarisms, obscurities, contrarities, and superfluities.” Hayburn believes the letter of Gregory clearly is referring to *text*, whereas Palestrina interpreted the reference to be to the music. He and Zoilo responded by radically shortening the melismatic nature of the chant, and adapting the music to text following word accents. Discussion at Hayburn, 37.

¹¹⁹ Michael Driscoll offers the observation that in the post-Tridentine era, as liturgy became more rubricized and controlled, the severe reduction of tropes and sequences effectively eliminated the only places where creativity could be fostered within the liturgy.

influential.¹²⁰ The papal and curial letters concerning the printing of chant books mainly have to deal with granting exclusive privileges to printers, because of newly-developed printing techniques; but churches are advised they do not have to correct their old books.¹²¹ And even the long fight of the printer Raimondi for papal approbation of an exclusive Medicean Edition (which was fated to have such consequences in nineteenth-century Cecilianism) ended in “the withdrawal of the briefs and encouragements which spoke too favorably of the enterprise. [Pope Paul V] left only the privilege which he had granted to the Medicean Printing Company, and *he forbade the imposition of the book on any church.*”¹²² In sum, Trent certainly did not address the Reformation challenge to provide for the people’s song; and, in the event, not even an official Roman *typica* for church music was itself accomplished.

2.3 Beyond Trent

The upheavals of the sixteenth century set in motion a fundamental process of change among those who remained loyal to the Catholic faith. John Bossy describes this process as “a transition from medieval Christianity to modern Catholicism,”¹²³ and insofar as the process related to liturgy, it was largely driven by the mandate of Trent to foster one

¹²⁰ See Hayburn, 44: Guidetti was the basis of all German & French editions from the late seventeenth c.

¹²¹ Ibid., 46.

¹²² Ibid., 64. Italics added.

¹²³ John Bossy, “The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,” in David M. Luebke, ed., *The Counter-Reformation: The Essential Readings* (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) 86-104, here 97.

universal norm for worship. This search for liturgical uniformity, says Bossy, played out in an effort to circumscribe extra-liturgical popular traditions of piety, which in the previous age had been based on kinship relations – preeminently the confraternities, and such practices as family wakes or church food feasts around certain holy days.¹²⁴ These traditions were seen to have made of the medieval church a “conglomerate of autonomous communities,” and their elimination after Trent was to “divert all streams of popular religion into a single parochial channel” for the “motive of imposing conformity in religious observance.” The point here is that “participation” was changing: a traditional mode of participation that was woven into the social fabric was being attenuated in favor of one that privileged the central parish liturgy. Mitchell describes this paradigm shift:

In order to achieve such goals, it was necessary, in the minds of humanist reformers, to remove liturgy from the turgid flow of daily life and make it, instead, a sort of “politically correct performance” – the “official cult” of the church as a public institution, rather than living worship by a holy community whose every member contributes to the action.¹²⁵

“Sad as it may be,” adds Bossy, “it is no doubt true that the emergence of a modern Catholicism depended on eliminating most of these elements of popular participation . . . [and,] on the popular front, *turning collective Christians into individual ones.*”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Discussion and short quotes here follow Bossy, “Counter-Reformation,” 89-97.

¹²⁵ Mitchell, “Crossing the Visible,” 558.

¹²⁶ Bossy, “Counter-Reformation,” 97. *Italics added.* Bossy cites the development of the confessional-box in this period as an example. Heinz describes a similar shift in penitential acts at communion: traditionally, communicants were summoned to kneel and recite together a general confession of sin (some “extraordinarily extensive”) in the vernacular. But the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614 alters this practice: now only an acolyte recites the *Confiteor*, in Latin, on behalf of the community. The people, who should still feel remorse and silently recite the vernacular formula, are to remain silent. Andreas Heinz, “Liturgical Rules and Popular Religious Customs Surrounding Holy Communion between the Council of

This effort would mean a newly dichotomized world, requiring the careful separation of liturgy from popular non-liturgy¹²⁷; the parish conventual mass would have to increasingly bear the weight of participation for the piety of these newly “individual” Christians. One important avenue of participation would have been the reception of communion, Trent having stated its wish “indeed that at each mass the faithful who are present should communicate, not only in spiritual desire but also by the sacramental partaking of the Eucharist.”¹²⁸ But as Andreas Heinz notes, the liturgical books published as a result of the council “did not adequately pass on this reform tendency.”¹²⁹ The Tridentine missal of 1570, as is well known, “describes the order of the Mass according to the model of the private Mass. The communion of the faithful therefore does not appear at all as a regular part of the *ordo missae*. It gives the impression of being a real intruder.”¹³⁰ A separate “communion rite” appears in the 1614 *Rituale Romanum* which “provides for the communion within the Mass the same order as for the administration of the sacrament outside the Mass, which are seen as of completely equal value.”¹³¹ Actual frequency of communion in the period following Trent has not been widely studied, but Heinz suggests at least the possibility of “considerable” increase given the decree of the council. But even

Trent and the Catholic Restoration in the 19th Century,” in Caspers *et al.*, *Bread of Heaven*, 119-143, here 129-130.

¹²⁷ “[T]he Counter-Reformation Church [became] obsessed with the problem of distinguishing liturgical from non-liturgical.” Bossy, “Counter-Reformation,” 97.

¹²⁸ Session XXII, Chapter 6. Schroeder, 147.

¹²⁹ Heinz, “Liturgical Rules and Popular Religious Customs,” 123.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

with an increase, reception regularly occurred outside the mass itself, and as Klauser points out, the Tridentine reforms did nothing to re-connect the devotions of the laity to the liturgy. The late medieval tradition of various “parallel devotions” among the laity during Mass continued apace – rosary, communal and personal devotions, and (especially in German-speaking lands) the use of vernacular hymns at Low Mass.¹³² The later influence of Jansenism and Josephinism would also again dampen communion frequency.¹³³

Moreover, if Catholics in this period were to come to terms with the mass as individuals, they were increasingly confronted with a developing liturgical spectacle of sight and sound which could hardly but leave them in the role of awed observers. The explosive growth of the Baroque was at hand, having a profound influence on church architecture and worship in ways that no one at Trent could have foreseen. Some accounts blame the church’s championing of the “Tridentine” style – Bossy claiming the “hobbling of sacred genres ensured a flight of musical talent toward secular ones”¹³⁴ – but in any event musical composition found freedom and room for its own now luxuriant growth in the secular world; as Quentin Faulkner aptly puts it, the “era of decisive Christian influence on music was moving to a close.” Between 1600 and 1800, opera was born, modern instruments and the orchestra developed, and the ascendancy of *expressive melody* (over the new structure of the independent figured-bass) defined musical appetites for generations to come. By the late 1500s the Gabriellis were already developing the brilliant polychoral style, featuring the

¹³² See below, 103-5: “Hymns: Path of Participation.”

¹³³ Heinz, “Liturgical Rules,” 124.

¹³⁴ Bossy, *Christianity in the West*, 167.

cori spezzati: vocal solos, tutti, duets, trios, dance-like orchestral interludes, and enormous climaxes rang in their music in Venice; Monteverdi followed with the pivotal *Mass and Vespers of Our Lady* in 1610; and church music was off and running, not to look back for 300 years. Mass composition was still favored, added instrumentation by Alessandro Scarlatti leading to the orchestral style of the Haydns and Mozart, in turn leading to Beethoven's symphonic form which finally stretched beyond limits any bound of liturgical proportion. But while the *moderno* privileging of melody also sought textual expression and affect, the structural unity and even intelligibility of *liturgical* texts were lost in their subjugation to episodic and ever-expansive musical forms. At times text didn't even matter: the Viennese tradition included instrumental "epistle sonatas" which presumed to replace the gradual of the Proper. Fellerer summarizes the post-Tridentine developments as a tectonic shift in worship music: as organ lofts flowered into opera balconies,¹³⁵ music became, rather than an integral part of the liturgy, *ornamental* (like chasubles and architecture): "a means of providing artistic display."

[T]he objective communal attitude of a music *of* worship was replaced by music *at* worship that unfolded freely and without restraint. . . . The sense of liturgy so deteriorated that the liturgical text to be sung was disregarded, shortened, or even replaced as the need arose.¹³⁶

The single Tridentine injunction against profane music was of little avail against artistic currents this strong. In fact, as Thomas Day points out, it was another stream of thought

¹³⁵ A good description is given in Paul Doncoeur, S.J., "From Other Lands: Lessons of Eucharistic History (II)" *Oratione Fratres* 23 no. 9 (July 24, 1949) 409-417, here 411.

¹³⁶ Fellerer, 134.

in the Tridentine acts which would hold sway over church art in the ensuing three centuries:

Since human nature is such that it cannot be easily elevated to the contemplation of divine matters without external supports, the church has instituted certain rites. . . . For she employs ceremonies such as sacred blessings, candles, incense, vestments, and many other things [handed down] from apostolic teaching and tradition, in which [ceremonies] the majesty of such a Sacrifice of the Mass is protected and the minds of the faithful are aroused through these visible signs of religion and piety toward the contemplation of the most lofty things which are hidden in this sacrifice.¹³⁷

Whether such “contemplation” leaves the faithful in a state of dis-connectedness from the Liturgy has been of course a *cause célèbre* in liturgical history. They certainly were left in a vacuum, as Clifford Howell (with many others) asserts: the rubrics of the Tridentine *editiones typicae* made no mention of the laity whatsoever, regarding the (action of the) Mass as an exclusively clerical activity (in a defensive posture toward the ministerial priesthood as against Protestant assertions of the priesthood of all believers.)¹³⁸ And of course, at High Mass the music flowing from the balcony became a substitutionary focus of interest. As Howell aptly describes:

[S]cintillating with marble and gold, adorned with paintings and sculptures of saints arrayed in whirling draperies, angels playing harps and blowing trumpets while seated on clouds of heavenly glory . . . liturgy had degenerated into a sort of opera looked at by the nobility from galleries and boxes near the sanctuary while choirs and

¹³⁷ Council of Trent, Twenty-second session (17 September 1562): Doctrine Concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass. Chapter V: The Ceremonies and Rites of the Mass. Trans. Day, “Elusive modernity,” 240.

¹³⁸ Howell, “From Trent to Vatican II,” 286-7.

orchestras displayed their talents from other galleries in the nave. The people down below gazed and listened.¹³⁹

In the face of these artistic developments, and despite the concerns of Trent over other types of music, Gregorian chant itself went into a period of decline, surviving essentially in the monastic and canonical hours; it was little heard in masses in most parish worship (with France probably retaining its use the most.)¹⁴⁰ When papal directives mention chant during this period, they address its use among clergy and religious, if for no other reason than to cite its sloppy performance and non-use in favor of “figured music.”¹⁴¹

2.3.1 Intelligibility

Yet in the midst of baroque liturgical excess, the church did not turn a blind eye to the gathered faithful. Trent had “installed” intelligibility,¹⁴² and if Latin had been

¹³⁹ Ibid., 289.

¹⁴⁰ “Gregorian chant found little place in the divine service. If used at all, it was arbitrarily refashioned to conform to the taste of the times. Everywhere efforts were made to simplify the chant or to create weak imitations of it, in order to halt its decline. Its artistic performance had already reached a low ebb in the seventeenth century. The church choir surrendered its performance to special choristers. Frequently the Gregorian chants were replaced in the service by compositions on freely selected texts or by instrumental pieces, or they were even left out entirely to make room for the massive figures with orchestral accompaniment.” Fellerer, 153.

By the eighteenth century, Joseph II of Austria issued health warnings over chanting (!): “His majesty desires convents and monasteries to be considered gathering places for future ministers. One can therefore not be indifferent to the effects that their activities in the monasteries have on their health . . . It is a well-known fact that chanting requires great physical exertion and thus weakens their health more than their ministerial duties. This is attested to by the statements of physicians and surgeons. In keeping with the present views of the regular clergy’s function, the very loud chanting is to be replaced by moderate chanting or by prayers spoken in a plain voice. At the same time this will serve to liberate more of their time for useful, scientific [!] purposes.” J. Kropatschek, *Handbuch aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph II. Ergangenen Verordnungen* (Vienna, 1784-90) X, 752f. Cited in Reinhard G. Pauly, “The Reforms of Church Music under Joseph II,” *The Musical Quarterly* 43 no. 3 (July 1957) 372-382, here 379.

¹⁴¹ Hayburn, 88-90; 94.

¹⁴² Mitchell, “Crossing the Visible,” 559.

defensively retained, direct intelligible communication was nevertheless sought and implemented in a variety of ways within the liturgy. Trent, for example, had affirmed the necessity of *preaching* the gospel as well as proclaiming it at mass,¹⁴³ enjoining the duty on all bishops or their delegates. As Frederick J. McGinness shows, in both the wording of Trent's canon and in subsequent homiletic practice, the humanist influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam is manifestly evident, despite official condemnation of his works.¹⁴⁴ Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes*, the "single most important document on preaching in western Europe" on the eve of Trent, emphasized such things as: the scriptural basis of sermons; the didactic nature of preaching ("feed[ing] the Lord's flock with sacred teaching"¹⁴⁵); *rhetorical accommodation to one's audience* (what Trent's decree called "*apte dicere*": "in proportion to the mental capacity [of the listener]: appropriate, respecting time, circumstances, persons, professions, and age."¹⁴⁶); consistent (*ergo*, intelligible) exposition of church doctrine; and a focus on people's personal habits of virtue and vice, which Trent (embracing the Franciscan preaching tradition) insisted be given "with briefness and plainness of speech."¹⁴⁷ By "placing preaching squarely in the rhetorical tradition of persuasion, a

¹⁴³ Session Five, Chapter II. See above, n. 93.

¹⁴⁴ Frederick J. McGinness, "An Erasmian Legacy: *Ecclesiastes* and the Reform of Preaching at Trent," Chapter 5 in Ronald K. Delph, *et al.*, eds., *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006) 93-109.

¹⁴⁵ Erasmus, *Ecclesiastes*, ed. Chomarat, 1:202. McGinness, "Erasmian Legacy," 100.

¹⁴⁶ McGinness, "Erasmian Legacy," 105.

¹⁴⁷ Trent 5, Chapter II (Schroeder, 26). The *Later Rule* (1223) of Saint Francis of Assisi states, "I admonish and exhort those brothers that when they preach their *language be well-considered and chaste* [Ps. 13:7 and Ps. 19:13] for the benefit and edification of the people, announcing to them vices and virtues, punishment and glory, with brevity, because our Lord when on earth kept his word brief." [Italics original here!] *Francis of Assisi*, 1:105, in McGinness, "Erasmian Legacy," 106.

matter vastly different from scholastic teaching or preaching,” sums up McGinness, “*Ecclesiastes* authoritatively defined the new Catholic homiletics that Trent affirmed.”¹⁴⁸

Moreover, the liturgical strictures of Trent took hold only gradually; in many dioceses and religious orders, local books of ritual remained in use for some time (the 1614 *Rituale Romanum* having been only recommended, not imposed.) These diocesan rituals “preserved many regional particularities,”¹⁴⁹ and impacted the liturgy especially through practices surrounding the reception of communion, specifically the “communion address,” the penitential rite, and the invitation to communion. The communion address developed in the later middle ages and continued after Trent (“tolerated” by the Congregation of Rites), surviving in some places until the Second Vatican Council. These were exhortations *in the vernacular* to those about to communicate, sometimes including post-communion prayers; they eventually found wide use in children’s first-communion celebrations. The practice became a fertile occasion for vernacular congregational hymnody,¹⁵⁰ and survived in the form of audible prayers of eucharistic preparation and thanksgiving.

2.3.2 *Annus qui*

From this post-Tridentine period also comes one of the most noted papal documents on music, remarkable not only in terms of size and erudition, but for its clear

¹⁴⁸ McGinness, “Erasmian Legacy,” 108-9.

¹⁴⁹ Heinz, “Liturgical Rules,” 127. Discussion here follows Heinz, 126-142.

¹⁵⁰ See below, on vernacular hymnody and Enlightenment reforms, 105-9.

and repeated demand that music at worship be *intelligible* for the faithful attending. Compared to other papal musical pronouncements, Benedict XIV's *Annus qui* (1749) is very lengthy, thought by some to indicate the weight of response necessary to the explosive musical developments of the baroque. And indeed a large part of the encyclical addresses the questions of instruments in church, of concerted masses, of motets and strictly instrumental music in the liturgy. In all of these areas, Benedict exhibits a cautious tolerance, recognizing the "new contemporary style" and sanctioning now the legitimacy of instrumental music in church.¹⁵¹ Yet firmly represented is the age-old warning over the separation of sacred and secular ("theatrical") styles,¹⁵² as well as the traditional understanding of the role of music as "impacting" the worshippers: it "adds to the elevation of the spirit of the faithful so that they may be more easily moved and disposed to devotion."¹⁵³ Though on this understanding the laity are not directly involved in music-making, nevertheless music is understood to be "participatory" insofar as it functions to edify, educate, and lift them to devotion. Benedict cites the Council of Toledo (1566):

*[E]verything sung in Church to praise God must be sung in such a manner as to favor, as far as possible, the instruction of the faithful and be a means of regulating piety and devotion and of urging the faithful to worship God and desire heavenly things.*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Fellerer, *History of Catholic Church Music*, 142.

¹⁵² *Annus qui* (hereafter AQ), sections 70-73, 78-79. Text and section numbering here taken from *Papal Teachings: The Liturgy* (Boston: Saint Paul Editions, 1962) 46-78.

¹⁵³ AQ sec. 93.

¹⁵⁴ AQ sec. 83. Italics added.

And it is here, in this area of the piety of the faithful, where the matter of intelligibility becomes so insistently pronounced. One short section of *Annus qui* succinctly states the theme:

In ecclesiastical chant care must be taken to ensure that the words are perfectly and easily understood. Music is allowed in Church only because it elevates man's mind to God, as St. Isidore teaches: "It is a custom of the Church to sing sweet melodies, the more easily to induce souls to compunction" (a). It is certain that this would be difficult, if the words could not be understood.

The Council of Cambrai, held in 1565, prescribed as follows: "What must therefore be sung in choir is destined to instruct the faithful: it must therefore be sung in such a manner as to be understood by the mind" (c).

a. *De Eccles. Officiis*, book 1, chapter 5.

c. Tit. VI, chapter 5, T. 10, p. 582 Harduin's Collection.¹⁵⁵

Indeed then the matter of intelligibility is applied to more than one facet of music-making.

In treating of instruments, for example, "We only warn that they be used exclusively to uphold the chant of the words, *so that their meaning be well impressed in the minds of the listeners*, and the souls of the faithful moved . . . ,"¹⁵⁶ Benedict citing Bishop Lindanus' complaint over instruments that

[t]he blare of trumpets, they make us tremble with their horns and other noises; nothing is omitted *that can render the words incomprehensible, bury their sense and duly cover them with earth.*¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ AQ sec. 81. Benedict goes on to cite similar injunctions from the Councils of Cologne (1536), Milan (1565), and Toledo (1566): AQ sec. 82-3.

¹⁵⁶ AQ sec. 91. Italics added.

¹⁵⁷ AQ sec. 92. Italics added.

Musical style is addressed *in relation to text*, which can be marginalized in three ways: by the polychoral “confounding of voices”; by music unsuitable to the sense of the text; and by the sheer auditory brilliance of the music which “make[s] more of the melody than of the words.”¹⁵⁸ Augustine would weep today, says Benedict, “not out of devotion, but for sorrow on hearing the music and not being able to understand the words.”¹⁵⁹ Benedict also understood that faithful participation could be compromised by an *improper* intelligibility: that in which music at worship was received (even enthusiastically) as popular entertainment, or which did not authentically communicate the *meaning* of a particular religious observance.¹⁶⁰ In both cases, participation (though real) occurs without the norming of text, and a faithful intelligibility is not achieved.

Chant in this period survives mainly in monasteries and cathedrals, AQ still asserting its priority:

This is the chant that excites the souls of the faithful to devotion and piety; it is also this chant which, if executed in God’s churches according to the rules and with decorum, is more willingly listened to by devout men, and more rightly preferred to chant called figurative.¹⁶¹

However Benedict contrasts the care over chant that is taken among Regulars, with the neglect of secular canons: careless not only in their manner of singing, they also delegate

¹⁵⁸ AQ sec. 78.

¹⁵⁹ AQ sec. 87.

¹⁶⁰ For both he cites the solemn Holy Week concerts in the Church of Lucca, occasions of large musical forces, large and eager audiences “in flagrant opposition to the sad atmosphere . . . of those days,” and “a great crowd of young people of both sexes . . . [who] commit grievous sins . . .” AQ sec. 95-97.

¹⁶¹ AQ, sec. 52.

their singing duties to others. In an earlier encyclical (*Cum semper*, 1744),¹⁶² Benedict addresses this “participatory” problem with two important points: (1) authentic participation in the offices is not achieved by a disinterested, mechanical rendering of the text; what matters is the inner congruence with the liturgical act, so that chant “be not sung hurriedly, but becomingly, always with the necessary pauses and with all the respect and devotion required.”¹⁶³ and (2) participation, at least among clergy and religious, is *not* achieved “by their sole presence in choir . . . if they remain silent and take no part in the chant of the psalmody,” but involves *actually engaging in the singing!*

We really do not see what particular reason the Canons of this or that Church can adduce to prove that they satisfy their duty by their sole presence in choir without taking part in the chant of the Divine psalmody.¹⁶⁴

Mitchell aptly sums up the participatory import of AQ:

Far from being the discredited stepchild of Enlightenment philosophy, intelligibility looms large in *Annus qui* as a papally sanctioned principle whose purpose is to preserve the integrity of liturgical speech and to insure that the faithful can “easily understand” what is said, sung, and done during public worship. This is a perhaps periphrastic way of saying that the *people* (and not only the priest) truly *participate* in the liturgy.¹⁶⁵

2.3.3 Hymns: Path of Participation

Active participation in the mass as music-making among Catholic laity by no means dropped off following the period of Trent; if anything, it appears that the popularity of

¹⁶² *Cum semper*, August 19, 1744, to the Bishops of Italy. In *Papal Teachings*, 25-28.

¹⁶³ *Cum semper*, sec. 15. The notion is reminiscent of Calvin.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Nathan D. Mitchell, “Papal Support for Reform: A Forgotten Chapter of Modern Liturgical History?” (*The Amen Corner*) *Worship* 77, no. 6 (November 2003) 554-565, here 557. Italics original.

pre-Reformation singing continued and in fact strengthened. Protestant reformers of course made foundational use of the vernacular congregational hymn, forcing Catholicism either to reject the practice or to respond in kind; “[a]lthough both reactions existed,” says Ruff, “the second seems to have been stronger.”¹⁶⁶ Consequently the evidence of vernacular hymn singing is strongest in areas touched by the Reformation, especially the German-speaking lands and eastward into Hungarian and Slovak regions.¹⁶⁷ Catholic interests seized upon the new technology of printing with an astonishing (and as yet only partially excavated) production of hymn-books. Ruff notes that while the first Lutheran hymnal appeared in 1524 (with eight hymns), the first Catholic hymnal appeared the same year in Austria (with 137 hymns!)¹⁶⁸ The extant materials (including both hymnals and periodic prohibitions) show a wide range of local usages, and suggest the likely prevalence of vernacular hymn-sing *even at the High Masses*.¹⁶⁹ Liturgical practices are implied in the various sources and types of hymnody:¹⁷⁰

- *Evangelienlieder*: hymns based on Gospels and epistles for the yearly cycle of readings.

¹⁶⁶ Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 576. Weinmann offers one reason: “The Protestant hymn-books which now appeared in rapid succession fell into the hands of the Catholics, who, in that song-loving epoch, seized with enthusiasm on the German songs and thus unconsciously became imbued with the spirit of the new doctrine. This danger could be checked only by Catholic anthologies . . .” *History of Church Music*, 67.

¹⁶⁷ Although Ruff already has scattered evidence of French, Italian, Spanish, American and Canadian vernacular materials. *Treasures and Transformations*, 587-8.

¹⁶⁸ Ruff, “A Millennium of Congregational Song,” 13.

¹⁶⁹ See Appendix A.

¹⁷⁰ Following the research of Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 576-588.

- Latin hymns in direct translation, “with indications for their extensive use at High Mass.”¹⁷¹
- Hymns “doubling” the items of the official liturgy
- Hymns which *replaced* official items, including Propers¹⁷²
- Hymns which replaced items of the Ordinary, including strophic settings of the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei (and Lord’s Prayer.)
- Especially prevalent are hymns before and after the homily, at the Offertory, and during communion.
- *Metrical psalmody* is even present, in one collection replacing the introit, offertory and communion propers.¹⁷³

Particularly striking is the occasional evidence of official approbation: Ruff notes episcopal approval (Bishop of Munster, 1677) of vernacular hymns at an array of places *in the high masses* – at the introit, Gloria, after the first reading, before the homily, at the offertory, elevation, Agnus Dei, during communion, and after the final blessing.¹⁷⁴ Meanwhile, at low masses, German hymns could be sung virtually through the entire mass (pausing only for the Gospel, consecration, and final blessing), and had their own hymnals published for this purpose.¹⁷⁵ In consideration of his research, Ruff offers this concluding summary:

Catholics everywhere after the Council of Trent sang congregational hymnody at devotions and other gatherings. One gets the impression

¹⁷¹ In Georg Witzel, *Psalmes Ecclesiasticus*, 1550. Cited in Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 576.

¹⁷² The *Mainz Cantual* of 1605.

¹⁷³ Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 578-9. All 150 psalms were set to rhymed meter and melody in the Catholic metrical psalter of Kaspar Ulenberg, published in Cologne in 1582. This psalter had numerous reprints into the nineteenth century.

¹⁷⁴ Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 578. One hymnal in Munster contained a decree from the local prince, explicitly *ordering* that German hymns be sung at high masses. *Ibid.*, n. 61.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 577-8.

from reports such as those reviewed here that this hymn singing practice was so popular that it inevitably, and quite regularly, crept into Mass throughout the Catholic world between the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council. The attitude of Church authorities ranged from strong advocacy to reluctant tolerance to moderately successful prohibition.¹⁷⁶

It might be noted that at the Council of Trent itself, the Tridentine high mass on Easter Sunday of 1546 featured a German hymn before the gospel.¹⁷⁷

2.3.4 Reforms

The periods of baroque, classical, and early romantic music (roughly the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries) coincided with and helped define “baroque” Catholic liturgy in Europe. But within these years also arose pronounced impulses of liturgical reform, seen in such developments as Gallicanism and Jansenism,¹⁷⁸ Febronianism and Josephism,¹⁷⁹ and the Synod of Pistoia. Proceeding from a didactic concern for liturgy, and concerned with the moral uplift of citizens, Enlightenment worship sought its goals through a more actively involved laity. To this end, fundamental

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 588.

¹⁷⁷ Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, trans. Dom Ernest Graf, OSB (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1958) Volume II, 448.

¹⁷⁸ For the reforms in general see J.D. Crichton, *Lights In Darkness: Forerunners of the Liturgical Movement* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996). On the French see F. Ellen Weaver, “The Neo-Gallican Liturgies Revisited,” *Studia Liturgica* 16 no. 3/4 (1986/7) 54-69; also Weaver, “Scripture and Liturgy for the Laity: The Jansenist Case for Translation,” *Worship* 59 no. 6 (November 1985) 510-521. Weaver notes, “There was, in fact, a real liturgical movement – to use our modern term – in seventeenth century France.” (“Scripture and Liturgy,” 511.)

¹⁷⁹ Pauly, “The Reforms of Church Music under Joseph II,” 372-382.

aims focused on simplification, a communal sense of worship, and more complete comprehension.¹⁸⁰

Not the priest (as such), nor the laity, but the entire Christian community and with it its presider, its reader, the curator of its mysteries, should carry out the liturgical rites in the knowledge of God and of his Christ. . . . All should not be silent observers, much less uncomprehending onlookers and admirers, but truly participants (communicants) of what happens in the assembly. . . . True participation of the common assembly in community worship insists that we consider whether each person is conscious of and remains aware of what the servant of the altar carries out in the name of Christ or in the name of the assembly. . . . ”¹⁸¹

Resultant reforms included vernacular access to scripture and rite, a single principal community mass around a single altar, an offertory procession of gifts, audible recitation of the canon (including no organ music!), and the reception of holy communion within the mass itself.¹⁸² In this quest for communal worship, the power of active music-making was not lost on these reformers, as it would not be lost on Pius X. The Jansenist priest Jubé of Asnières sang the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Credo with the people.¹⁸³ In Austria, Joseph II used his imperial authority in a *hofdekret* of 1781 to *order* every parish to purchase copies

¹⁸⁰ These three main considerations are adduced by A. L. Mayer, “Liturgie, Aufklärung und Klassizismus,” *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* IX (1929) 97. Cited in Pauly, “Joseph II,” 374.

¹⁸¹ “Nicht der Geistliche, nicht der Laie, sondern die christliche Gemeinde und mit ihr ihre Vorsteher, ihre Lehrer, die Verweser ihrer Geheimnisse, sollen durch die liturgischen Anstalten in der Erkenntnis Gottes und seines Christus fortwachsen. . . . Alle sollen nicht musige Zuschauer, viel weniger unwissende Angaffer und Bewunderer dessen, was in der Versammlung geschieht, sondern wirkliche Theilnehmer (Communicantes) seyn. . . . Die wirkliche Theilnahme der Gemeinglieder an der gemeinschaftlichen Gottesverehrung läßt sich nur dann denken, wenn jedes sich dessen bewusst wird und bewusst bleibt, was der Diener des Altars im Nahmen Christi oder im Nahmen der Gemeinde unternimmt . . . ” Franz Kohlschein, “Diözesane Gesang- und Gebetbücher in der Katholischen Aufklärung (ca. 1770-1841): Eine Einführung,” in Kohlschein/Küppers, “*Grosse Sänger*,” 1-14, here 5 (my translation). Cited in Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 582.

¹⁸² Crichton, 31.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

of hymn collections in German.¹⁸⁴ This already developed Germanic hymn tradition easily evolved in the eighteenth century into the so-called *Singmesse*, a fully hymnic parallel “ordinary” of the mass. The 1777 Landshut hymnal¹⁸⁵ was of central importance in this regard, containing Johann Kohlbrenner’s “*Hier liegt vor Deiner Majestät*,” a *Singmesse* which “was universally adopted in Austria and is still sung today.”¹⁸⁶ In a visit to Munich in 1782, Pope Pius VI personally commended Kohlbrenner on this work;¹⁸⁷ the following year, prince-archbishop Hieronymous Colloredo decreed that this collection alone was to be “used diligently” (“and no other music and songs are to be used”) in the independent principality of Salzburg (the “German Rome”).¹⁸⁸ An Imperial letter to the bishops of Lombardy expressed the reform impulse:

¹⁸⁴ J. Kropatschek, *Handbuch aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph II. Ergangenen Verordnungen*. (Vienna: n.p., 1784-90) Vol. I, pp. 420 ff. Cited in Pauly, “The Reforms of Church Music under Joseph II,” 375 n. 8.

¹⁸⁵ *Der heilige Gesang zum Gottesdienst in der romisch-katholischen Kirche* (Landshut, 1777). Studies of this hymnal are found in Franz Kohlschein and Kurt Küppers, eds., *Der Grosse Sänger David – Euer Muster: Studien zu den ersten diözesanen Gesang- und Gebetbüchern in der katholischen Aufklärung*, *Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen* Band 73. (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1993.) These are cited in Ruff, *Treasures and Transformations*, 582-3.

¹⁸⁶ Pauly, “Joseph II,” 375. The Kohlbrenner *Singmesse* includes German texts for the Kyrie, Gloria, “Gospel” (i.e. Gradual), Credo, Offertory, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, Communio, and *Ite missa est*. Michael Haydn’s 1790 setting of these texts became enormously popular. The modern edition is Michael Haydn, *Erstes deutsches Hochamt: Hier liegt vor deiner Majestät: für vierstimmigen gemischten Chor (vier Solostimmen nicht obligat) und Orgel*, herausgegeben und revidiert von Otto Biba. (Altötting: A. Coppenrath, 1982).

¹⁸⁷ Pauly, “Joseph II,” 375.

¹⁸⁸ Pauly, “Joseph II,” 380.

It is proper that the people not only are present at the celebration of the divine rites but also take part . . . [They should] accompany the celebration of Mass with hymns in the vernacular . . . the singing of [such] hymns being a more forceful means of elevating the mind . . . Bishops should realize the benefits derived from public devotions . . . from the multitude united by the singing of sacred hymns, to the harmonious accompaniment of the organ, as is the custom of the German Catholics . . . To the bishops falls the responsibility of having such hymns composed and of approving them.¹⁸⁹

Much of Enlightenment reform, however, had proceeded as an expression of “political Jansenism,” asserting a local control over liturgy independent of Rome. Thus although Pius VI had sympathies with some of the musical developments, he found it necessary to condemn the movements on jurisdictional grounds.¹⁹⁰ And in fact, though the reforms had asserted local control *vis-à-vis* Rome, they nonetheless were carried out in a “top-down” manner relative to the Catholic people themselves,¹⁹¹ which may in part explain why there was widespread *dislike* of inclusory changes intended to benefit the laity (the disruption of established popular piety in any case never being easy).¹⁹² The need to

¹⁸⁹ Imperial letter to the bishops of Lombardy: *Regolamento dell’Officiatura delle Chiesa*, Vienna, *Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv*, 1787, Lomb. Collect. fasc. 68, no. 7 (punctuation *sic*). In Pauly, “Joseph II,” 376.

¹⁹⁰ *Auctorem fidei*, 1792.

¹⁹¹ See Nathan Mitchell, *Church, Eucharist, and Liturgical Reform at Mercurburg: 1843-1857* (Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1978) 224-254. Mitchell contrasts the pattern of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment reformers with the later model of the “Catholic Enlightenment” in Germany, connected with the nineteenth-century Tübingen theologians. Arising in an age of liberal and democratic ideals, the Tübingers sought reforms from the “bottom up,” reflecting their theology of “the Church as an organic community of all its members and as the instrument of the Holy Spirit. . . . [T]he needs of the Church demanded a return to an organic community similar to that of the first centuries.” Donald J. Dietrich, “Johann Baptist von Hirscher: The Kingdom of God in the Revolution of 1848,” *Église et Théologie* 9 (1978) 291-318, here 313-4.

¹⁹² Crichton, 40. Pauly notes that in smaller urban and rural parishes, “every good thought is driven out of the heart of the common people by the miserable fiddling; and horrible howling only invites stupidity

“bring the people along” with a given reform, even intended *for* them, was a lasting lesson here,¹⁹³ one that played in the consciousness of the twentieth-century liturgical movement, and indeed remained an issue in the wake of Vatican II. Nonetheless, music readily found its potent role in early attempts at liturgical reform, attempts which sought to express an ideal attributed to Pius X: that liturgy is “not something primarily to be seen or heard, but shared by individual participation in community.”¹⁹⁴

2.4 Nineteenth Century

“The language wherein to address God and humble ourselves before Him”

- Benedict XV, *Annus qui*

One might say that the nineteenth century set about particularly the task enunciated in *Annus qui*, that of “carefully distinguishing what is fitting.” As the nineteenth century progressed, the music issue was very much in the air, at least in ecclesial circles. To some, the “abuses, ignorance, corruption, and profanation of Church Music ... are advancing with gigantic steps, [and] will very soon lead back to the barbarism of the middle ages . . .”¹⁹⁵ Yet no less than Pius X acknowledged in 1903 that

in so many churches throughout the world such consoling and often such splendid results have been obtained in the reform of sacred

and inattention.” (*Hirtenbriefe . . . gesammelt und auf die . . . Jubelfeyer . . . dargebracht . . .*, Salzburg, 1782, p. 70.). Nevertheless, “Neither city nor country congregations wanted to give up their instrumental Masses and litanies, no matter how inadequately performed.” Pauly, “Joseph II,” 381.

¹⁹³ “A reform in which the people play no part is bound to fail.” Mitchell, *Mercersburg*, 258.

¹⁹⁴ Crichton, 152.

¹⁹⁵ Hayburn, 215.

music, in spite of the very grave difficulties that have been happily overcome, now that everyone realises [sic] the necessity of a complete change in these matters . . . ¹⁹⁶

The turbulence over church music through the nineteenth century produced a substantial array of written and verbal discourse, scholarship, legislation, and practices of and around church music, and these in turn provide important and detailed data for us: a vivid picture of current liturgical practice (especially musical abuses); an emerging group of general principles concerning liturgical music; an ample list of simple “good and bad” adjectives describing church music; problems of authority in music, and the realities of enactment and enforcement.

2.4.1 General State of Affairs

The somewhat anecdotal evidence we have suggests that Rome, center of Latin Christianity, and Italy generally were the most notorious for musical excesses. Gaspare Spontini writes:

I repeat it: such sad and numerous profanations of the holy place by the introduction of unseemly music taken from theatrical works, I have not encountered in other countries, nor even in the temples of other communions, whether in Germany, France, England, Switzerland, or elsewhere; only in my native Italy, and in the Pontifical States, and the more especially in Rome . . . ¹⁹⁷

Forty years later, the American transplant John Singenberger observes,

If we except the Papal Chapel . . . and perhaps one or two more, the vocal or concerted music to be heard at sacred functions in the other three hundred and odd churches of Rome, and sometimes even

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 232-3.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 123.

in the Basilicas, oscillates between undignified triviality and elaborate theatrical effect; whilst as to organ playing the less said about that the better.¹⁹⁸

These practices in Rome were imitated to a greater or lesser degree world-wide; nevertheless, they formed the basis of papal and curial regulation intended for the global church. Here follows a summary description:

Practices

- Sacred texts set in operatic style, or even to entirely reproduced and known operatic or secular melodies.¹⁹⁹
- Masses written in highly differentiated, multi-movement concerted style; breaks between sections (even of one “movement”) regarded “as being an opportunity for moving about, whispering or loud conversation, on the part of musicians and people . . .”²⁰⁰
- Solos, duets, trios, with “theatrical cadences with bursts of the voice, not to say cries.”²⁰¹
- Directors and musicians engage in loud conversation and whispering generally. Musicians “put [their] instruments away and leave their places before the conclusion of the sacred function,” thus distracting the people.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 142.

¹⁹⁹ “What ideas can be awakened in the minds of hearers, when they hear in the church a *Kyrie*, a *Gloria*, a *Credo*, or a motet; or hear performed on the organ the same air, in the same rhythm, and with the same expression, that afforded them amusement the previous evening, when they danced to it, and when it evoked some latent passion, or excited a new one? Alas the holy House of God. Alas the venerable house of prayer. Alas the Divine Sacrifice of the Altar, the irritated justice of God, which sooner or later will be sure to visit us.” Spontini quoting Baini, in Hayburn, 124.

²⁰⁰ Hayburn, 135.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 138b.

²⁰² Ibid., 135.

- Dwindling use of Gregorian Chant (esp. Italy); replacement by a quick version of chanting proper texts – either a psalm tone or even *recto tono*.²⁰³
- Instrumental love of dance music (including “polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, minuets, rondos, schottisches, varsoviennes, quadrilles, contredanses, polonaises, etc.”) and profane pieces (“national hymns, popular airs, love and comic songs, ballads, etc.”)²⁰⁴
- General disregard for musical directives at any level. Many claim not to understand clearly the musical regulations and prescriptions, asserting vagueness.²⁰⁵
- Discord among choirs & privileges; “little bands of musical *dilletanti*, who run about from church to church, to claim the right of directing the music . . .”²⁰⁶
- Poor or neglected music training in seminaries and ecclesiastical colleges
- People’s base tastes: “in churches and institutions, where all classes and conditions of worldlings are congregated, so prone to distractions, so troubled with passions, and so susceptible of the seductive charms of purely secular music.”²⁰⁷
- Moreover: people turn backs to altar “in order to stare at the singers and the other executants in the tribune over the church door.”²⁰⁸
- Organists: use of “too brilliant or distracting sonatas” and theatre pieces;²⁰⁹ accompanying Gregorian Chant too loudly, esp. with reed stops;²¹⁰

²⁰³ Ibid., 138, #7. *Recto tono* was the practice of chanting on a single pitch. A. M. Roguet, OP, notes in 1954 that “Because of lack of preparation of the faithful, or because of the difficulty of the music, pastors often fall back on the *recto tono*, which is still chant, but on a single note; in such cases the sung Mass is reduced to its most simple expression, which is the *Missa dialogata*. . . . [I]t lacks the lyrical element proper to chant, which really ought to characterize the Sacrifice of thanksgiving . . .” (“The Theology of the Liturgical Assembly,” 133). A decade later Francis A. Brunner snarls about “the incessant and senseless psalmodizing that is the rule and routine in our churches today.” (“Singing the Propers of the Mass,” CEC 91, no. 1 [Spring 1964] 13-20, here 19.)

²⁰⁴ Hayburn, 138, #11.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 222a. “[S]o easy is it for passion, or at any rate for shameful and inexcusable ignorance, to elude the will of the Church and to continue year after year in the same regrettable manner.” Ibid., 232.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 123.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 125.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 135.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

prolonging chant, thinking it “must be charged with long symphonic preludes, [and] intersected with external intermezzi . . .”²¹¹ Incompetence, especially in improvisation, which “can no longer be tolerated.”²¹²

- Exposition and Benediction of Blessed Sacrament: organists play “theatrical *morceaux*”²¹³; *Tantum Ergo* especially treated “in a manner suggestive of a romanza, a cavatina or an adagio, or the *Genitori* as an allegro.”²¹⁴
- At Vespers: uneven treatment of psalmody, a favorite outlet for composers, “particularly at orchestral Vespers, when two or three Psalms are sung with full orchestra, and then the other Psalms and the Hymn are rapidly hurried through with organ accompaniment only, in a way calculated to hinder rather than to promote edification . . .”²¹⁵
- As substitute for chant: “endless musical compositions on the words of the Psalms, . . . formed in the style of the old theatrical works, most of them of such small value as works of art that they would not be borne even at second-rate concerts.”²¹⁶
- Use of “noisy” instruments: drums, kettledrums, tambourines, cymbals, triangles, harps, “and so on.”²¹⁷ Occasionally, “bands.” Use of pianoforte.
- Tendency of organ and orchestras to overtake and smother the singing.
- Music prolonged out of all proportion to liturgical action.²¹⁸
- Liturgical texts: “long and dull repetitions . . . capricious inversions without meaning . . . music is prolonged without measure.”²¹⁹ Omission of parts of the Ordinary or Proper, or changing their order.

²¹⁰ Hayburn, 246.

²¹¹ Ibid., 216

²¹² Ibid., 218a

²¹³ Ibid., 133.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 217.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 135.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 233.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 134, 229.

²¹⁸ “It is not lawful to make the priest at the altar wait longer than the ceremonies allow.” Ibid., 229.

- Because of the length of High Mass (*Missa Cantata*), concurrent Low Masses are offered “in almost all the churches” which “induce the people to leave the temple at any part of the Solemn Mass.”²²⁰
- (As always!), general division of opinion over the state of affairs. “The fatal source of all the evil I have been deploring is to be found in the inveterate and furious discord which divides the musical societies and institutions of Rome. . . . [A]ll these divided interests engender lawsuits and dissensions
...”²²¹

In Leo XIII’s edict on music from 1884, *Ordinatio quoad sacram musicam*, one series of injunctions paints a colorful and probably representative picture:²²²

10. It is forbidden to make use of over-affected inflections of the voice, to make too much noise in beating time and giving orders to the performers, to turn one’s back to the altar, to chatter, or do anything else whatever which is out of place in the holy place. It is to be desired that the choir-loft should not be over the main entrance of the church, and that the performers should, as far as possible, be unseen, subject to the prudent regulation of the Ordinary.
11. It is strictly forbidden to play in church even the minutest portion of theatrical or operatic selections of all dances whatsoever, such as polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, minuets, rondos, schottisches, varsoviennes, quadrilles, popular airs, love and comic songs, ballads, etc.
12. Instruments which are too noisy are prohibited, such as side and big drums, cymbals, etc., instruments used by orchestral performers and the piano-forte. Nevertheless, trumpets, flutes, tymbals and the like – which were used among the people of Israel to accompany the praises of God, the Canticles and the Psalms of David – are allowed – on the condition that they be skillfully and moderately used – especially during the *Tantum ergo* at Benediction.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 134. “[T]o make the music please there must be at least twenty repetitions of the words *Gloria, laudamus, gratias, Domine*, to say nothing of the thousand repetitions of *Credo*, often with the danger of making the singers, who should be making a profession of faith, utter the most appalling blunders, and the most frightful heresies.” Ibid., 216.

²²⁰ Ibid., 216.

²²¹ From the report “The Music in the Churches of Rome,” generated by Gaspare Spontini (no date, probably in the 1840’s) for Gregory XVI (?). Hayburn, 123.

²²² Hayburn, 138.

13. Improvisation, a *fantasia*, on the organ is forbidden to those who cannot do it fittingly, i.e., in a manner which respects, not only the rules of art, but the piety and recollection of the faithful.
14. In composition the following rules must be observed: The *Gloria* must not (in dramatic fashion) be divided by solos into too many detached portions. The *Credo* must also be composed as a consecutive whole, and if it is divided into concerted pieces, these must be so disposed as to form one homogenous whole. Let solos, theatrical cadences with bursts of the voice, not to say cries, be avoided as much as possible, as they distract the faithful from their devotions. And, above all, let care be taken that the words be preserved in the order they stand in the text, and not be inverted.

Given the cumulative effect of all the above, an English bishop looked forward to the reforms of *TLS* as “a day for which many, both clergy and laity, have long been anxiously looking.”²²³

2.4.2 Responses, Regulation

“To distinguish what is fitting . . .”

Ideas about church music emerged during the nineteenth century in response to three general phenomena: the growth of the Caecilian movement, the controversy over editions of chant books between Regensburg and Solesmes, and the long list of abuses in liturgical music practice summarized above. A curial decree from November 1856 sums up, in its opening sentence, the essence of Rome’s position:

If all Directors of Music (composers) drew their inspirations from piety and religion, as is the case with some, and always bore in mind that their *music is intended to praise God in His holy Temple and to excite the*

²²³ Hayburn, 219. Sarto as patriarch of Venice claimed that profane music gave scandal “not only to the good, who are distracted by it in their devotions, but to the heterodox and schismatics, whom I myself have often heard deplore such profanations . . .” Ibid., 218.

devotion of the faithful, there would be no necessity to prescribe rules for musical composition. *However, . . .*²²⁴

This was, however, a big “however”! Not surprisingly, the matter could not be left there. An analytical summary of general “principles” follows, but it might first be noted that much, indeed most, of the nineteenth-century discussion has a decidedly “ad hoc” quality about it. People who are reasoning about and regulating church music (though they often cite the above “classic” bi-partite principle), are not really about the business of constructing grand and perduring theories about music and liturgy; they are rather responding to what to them are very immediate and irritating developments in practice. Repeatedly among these we find cited the use of profane or theatrical music – including loud instruments and exhibitionist performance – and the “interminable repetitions” of liturgical text, “which tire out devotion instead of exciting it.”²²⁵ In 1894, an important change of approach will occur in Leo XIII’s *De Music Sacra* (inspired by De Santi’s and Sarto’s *Votum* of 1893). Prior to that, here is what was on the table:

²²⁴ Hayburn, 136. Italics added.

²²⁵ Ibid., 133.

2.4.2.1 Purpose of Church Music

General

Pio Nono²²⁶ states the classic two-fold formulation: “Music is intended to praise God in His holy temple, and to excite the devotion of the faithful.” Various nineteenth-century voices give variations on this theme:

- “Exclusive aim of producing piety²²⁷ in the souls of the faithful”²²⁸
- “Carry the mind to heaven”
- “Recall minds from the allurements of human affairs”
- For performers, to “Give praise to the divine Majesty.”

Particular

Music is to support liturgy and make it “more decorous and devout”; never to dominate it.
(“The vocal and instrumental music which is forbidden by the church is that which by its character or by the form which it takes *tends to distract* the faithful in the house of prayer.”
– 1884, Leo XIII)²²⁹

Several particular ways in which music was to aid “Worship and Edification” find repeated emphasis, and are usually expressed negatively:

²²⁶ Pius IX reigned from 1846 to 1878.

²²⁷ Sometimes “piety” is given a distinctly penitential tone: “in order that in the chant of the divine praises the listeners may be aroused to sorrow for their admitted guilt and to a sense of piety . . .” Pius VIII, quoted in Hayburn, 121.

²²⁸ Ibid., 133.

²²⁹ Ibid., 137. Italics added.

1. In the Matter of *Text*

- a. church music is not primarily instrumental, but *vocal*
- b. Liturgical text must be presented properly: not broken up, not unintelligibly given repetition or inversion, nor sloppily rushed through²³⁰

2. In Matters of *Timing*: Vocal and/or instrumental music must not unduly lengthen liturgies.²³¹

3. In Manner of *Performance*: Vocal and/or instrumental music not to “distract the faithful from their devotions” for the purpose of attracting attention to the performers.²³²

2.4.2.2 *Nature of Church Music*

“*Worthy of the House of God*” is the undying refrain, the general rallying cry of church music reform in the nineteenth century. Often the reference is linked to the “grave and pious” rites, as by Pius IX: “In harmony with the sanctity of the house of God and the majesty of the divine rites.”²³³ Eventually *TLS* codified “three qualities of sacred music,” which were first penned for Cardinal Sarto in 1893. These qualities are summarized here:

1. *Holiness*. Holiness is demanded first by the majesty of the God who is worshipped, a majesty which in turn inheres in the House of God, and in the Rite itself.²³⁴ It *excludes* profane or theatrical composition or

²³⁰ “. . . Long and dull repetitions and the capricious inversions without meaning of the psalms and hymns . . .” Hayburn, 134.

²³¹ Again, this “principle” is understood in very concrete terms: “All singing is forbidden which would prolong the divine offices beyond the prescribed limits of noon in the case of Mass, and of the *Angelus* in that of Vespers and Benediction . . .” Ibid., 138.

²³² “Let solos, theatrical cadences with bursts of the voice, not to say cries, be avoided as much as possible.” “It is to be desired that the choir-loft should not be over the main entrance of the church, and that the performers should, as far as possible, be unseen . . .” Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., 128.

²³⁴ Patrizi, *ibid.*, 133.

performance practices.²³⁵ “Holiness” implies that music remain within the bounds of moderate expression, exhibiting a “proper religious dignity.”²³⁶ Sacred texts do not redeem profane music.²³⁷

2. *Artistry.* Music must be competently performed. “Organists and choir-masters will devote all their efforts and their talent to the best possible execution of the music . . .”²³⁸

Fine music does not redeem poor performance.²³⁹ Contemporary composition within limits of sacrality is acceptable.²⁴⁰

3. *Universality.* For Rome and the Cecilians, “universality” in large degree meant “universal obedience”: not necessarily uniformity of music, but control over repertoire and personnel. For the Cecilians and Solesmes, however, Gregorian chant was understood to be a potentially *universal language* in liturgical usage. It was to be “everywhere cultivated,” in lay singing, and in small churches.

To put the matter adjectivally, the following lists emerge from amidst the vast verbiage of this century:²⁴¹

“Good” Music

- “Beautiful, consoling, noble, grandiose, full of religious feeling.”²⁴²
- Sweet, joyful, fervent
- In harmony with the spirit of the church

²³⁵ Hayburn, 137-8.

²³⁶ “Too lively or exciting movements are forbidden. If the words be joyous, it should be expressed by the sweetness of religious mirth, and not by the unbridled liveliness of the dance.” Ibid., 137.

²³⁷ Ibid., 136.

²³⁸ Ibid., 139, #19.

²³⁹ Ibid., 141.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 125.

²⁴¹ These descriptive lists are generated essentially from Roman regulations, drawing largely on Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music*, especially Chapter Six, “Nineteenth Century,” pp. 115-144.

²⁴² Hayburn, 125.

- Can be simple
- Can be easy to perform
- Dignified, Serious
- Gravity, Majesty, Decency, Decorum

“Bad” Music

- Profane, Vulgar
- Theatrical; suggestive of the stage
- Scandalous, Depraved
- Frivolous, trivial, ridiculous
- Unreserved levity
- Uneducated; utterly unseemly
- Exaggerated sweetness; “luxurious and clamorous”
- Noisy passages; deafening
- “Full of Rhythm”; Unbridled liveliness of the dance
- Words more rapid than ordinary discourse; *Parlante* style
- Over-affected inflections of the voice

2.4.2.3 How important is church music?

There is no doubt that church music aroused many passions in the nineteenth century. On the negative side, many clergy were said to “despise” music in the church. Its place in the liturgy seemed somewhat a *fait accompli*: taken for granted, perhaps grudgingly so, and many would have been just as glad to see it outlawed altogether, precisely because of the well-documented abuses noted above. Many others regarded it, if not a necessary evil, as nevertheless somewhat tangential to worship: able to contribute something – even a lot – but only if kept within strict bounds. So Pius IX:

When united with the solemn supplication of the church, sacred hymns contribute much to move the soul and promote piety, so far as the genius which has originated them, and the industry which has elaborated them, have been in harmony with the sanctity of the house of God and the majesty of the divine rites.²⁴³

That is, music on this understanding is essentially decorative: it *adds*, it can “contribute much” to the “gravity and ecclesiastical decorum” of liturgy (in Cardinal Zurla’s phrase), but it is not *essential*. A subtle but significant shift, however, comes in the last papal document of this century, Leo XIII’s 1894 *De musica sacra*.²⁴⁴ Leo does not begin by addressing music in terms of particular concrete qualities it should possess; here, rather, is the beginning of a *theological* connection between music and rite.

Article 1. Every musical composition harmonizing with the spirit of the accompanying sacred function and religiously corresponding with the meaning of the rite and the liturgical words moves the faithful to devotion, and is therefore worthy of the House of God.²⁴⁵

We see the traditional phrases “move the faithful to devotion” and “worthy of the House of God,” but now these are not aided by particular “good” vs. “bad” qualities, but rather accomplished by a necessary (though as yet unspecified) relationship of music to the “*spirit of the accompanying sacred function*,” the “*meaning of the rite*,” and the “*meaning of the liturgical words*.” This is a momentous advance, which will reach full flower in Pius X (“*pars integrans*”) and later Vatican II (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*).²⁴⁶ (Leo, clearly working off the

²⁴³ Hayburn, 128.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 141-2.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 141.

²⁴⁶ See Winfried Aymans, “Continuity and Development of Ecclesiastical Legislation Regarding Gregorian Chant in the Light of Vatican 2,” in Robert A. Skeris, translator and editor, *Crux et Cithara. Selected essays on liturgy and sacred music*. (Altötting: Verlag Alfred Coppenrath, 1983) 236-243.

model of the Votum of Cardinal Sarto of Venice,²⁴⁷ moves next to Gregorian chant as best fulfilling these functions.)

Gaspare Spontini, in his report on music in Rome to Gregory XVI, writes, as Hayburn says, a “beautiful and touching passage on the true quality of church music,” and in large part describes and sums up the spirit of an age:

I do not wish it to be understood that music should retrograde . . . No: quite the contrary. I mean that the music of the church should carry the mind to heaven; that it should praise the Lord in melody that would be sweet, joyful, fervent, animated, and pleasing, as we fancy the angels and seraphim sing in heaven, but we should never degenerate into the music of bacchanalians, or into that of demons who shout and scream their blasphemies in hell. . . . [S]elect, invent (if you have ability) themes and melodies that will be beautiful, consoling, noble, grandiose, and full of religious feeling; let them be expressive of the sacred words (if you can understand them), which are words of joy, of devotion, of recollection, or of compunction, respectively; and avoid an exaggerated style, sentimental sighings, staccato surprises, and all those bizarre and ridiculous ornamentations and flourishes, contortions of the voice or *salti mortali*, which are repulsive even in comic opera, but with which our ears are so constantly tormented in church.²⁴⁸

The felt need for reform was all the more acute, given music’s role as “that most noble scientific art regarded by the human race as the language wherein to address God and humble ourselves before Him.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ See below, pp. 151-4.

²⁴⁸ Hayburn, 125.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 125-6.

2.4.3 Reform Movements

2.4.3.1 Solesmes

Over the course of the century, two embracing but diverse movements of reform looked to these problems in church music, and thereby helped lay the groundwork for the eventual appearance of *Tra le sollecitudini*. Prosper Guéranger and the monks of the re-founded Benedictine abbey of Solesmes not only began the paleographical research which scientifically re-established an authentic, early, and virtually uniform version of Gregorian chant, but they too had begun by *using* the chant as the foundation of their liturgical life together; moreover, they advocated an ultra-montane global acceptance of the Roman rite, particularly in France.²⁵⁰ Some look to the atmosphere of Romanticism in the early nineteenth century for a clue to the Solesmes phenomenon – in the wake of the dryness of rationalist ideals and the violence of the French Revolution, the “desire to recall a lost, irrecoverable past . . . [was to be found in] the medieval world of Christian chivalry and Catholic ceremonial.”²⁵¹ Others adduce a desperate reach to hold together the spiritual unity of European Catholicism in a secularizing and politically disintegrating world.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Extensive research and some cautious revisions of the traditional views on Guéranger are found in a four-part series in *Worship* by R. W. Franklin: “Guéranger: A View on the Centenary of His Death,” vol. 49 no. 6 (June-July 1975) 318-328; “Guéranger and Pastoral Liturgy: A Nineteenth Century Context,” vol. 50 no. 2 (March 1976) 146-162; “Guéranger and Variety in Unity,” vol. 51 no. 5 (September 1977) 378-399; and “The Nineteenth Century Liturgical Movement,” vol. 53 no. 1 (January 1979) 12-39.

²⁵¹ Henry Chadwick, “Romanticism and Religion,” in *Tradition and Exploration*, 217-228, here 219.

²⁵² “A single, international, Latin liturgy – celebrated by all Catholics from Paris to Warsaw, from Dublin to Naples – seemed (to Guéranger and others) the best guarantee of stability and social cohesion. Thus, fearing that ‘the center would not hold,’ Catholics like Guéranger turned to the Roman liturgy’s rites and symbols as the best resource for rebuilding . . .” Nathan Mitchell, “From Trent to the Liturgical Movement,” *Today’s Liturgy* 26 no. 1 (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2003) 10.

2.4.3.2 Caecilians.

At the same time, a quite different reform movement coalesced outside the church's hierarchy in the Caecilian movement. Perhaps motivated by similar Romantic ideals and concern for universal Catholic cult, this movement represented a substantially new development in church music reform: that is, reform as instigated and led by the *musicians themselves* (both lay and ordained). Although castigated as elitist in that sense by Howell ("this was never a populist movement; it was confined to intellectuals whose interests were aesthetic and archeological"²⁵³), it nevertheless aligned its goals with those traditional Tridentine ideals: Gregorian chant and classic Palestrinian polyphony. Caecilianism had waxed and waned in several incarnations during previous centuries,²⁵⁴ but in the nineteenth century, national groups began to coalesce and organize themselves; more importantly, these bodies and the goals of the movement received formal papal recognition and approbation. The Germans led the way, with Kaspar Ett's revival of Allegri's *Miserere* in Munich in 1816 considered "the first artistic step of the new movement."²⁵⁵ By 1868, with only fifty supporters, Franz Xavier Witt established the *Allgemeine Deutsche Cäcilien-Verein* and its periodical *Musica Sacra* (Ratisbon). Two years later this association received official papal approval (Pius IX's *Multum ad commovendos animos*, 1870.) Hayburn notes that from this humble beginning, the Society of St. Cecilia

²⁵³ Howell, "From Trent to Vatican II," 290.

²⁵⁴ After the Council of Trent, Gregory XIII founded a Roman Society of Musicians, which later took the name Congregation of St. Cecilia. Hayburn, 116.

²⁵⁵ Weinmann, *History of Church Music* 162, cited in Kieran Anthony Daly, *Catholic Church Music in Ireland, 1878-1903* (Dublin, Ireland; Portland, OR: Four Courts Press Ltd., 1995) 8.

eventually numbered more than ten thousand members. Its spiritual center always stood in the School of Church Music at Regensburg,²⁵⁶ disseminating its ideals worldwide as pupils from Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy, and the United States studied there and returned home.²⁵⁷

At the Cecilian organizing conference in 1868, Witt named five areas of reform: “The purpose of our organization is to further Catholic church music, particularly 1) Plainsong; 2) Congregational singing; 3) Organ playing of fitting music; 4) Polyphonic vocal music, ancient and modern; 5) Instrumental music.”²⁵⁸ Yet, as with Solesmes, the driving spirit at bottom was a concern for Plainsong, because this became understood in a new way: not just “proper,” but “true” church music. The abuses he saw in Bavaria, Witt felt (and wrote in his book *Der Zustand der Katholischen Kirchenmusik Zunächst in Altbayern*, 1865) stemmed from “the almost total neglect of plainsong.”²⁵⁹ “There are scarcely ten churches in any diocese in which Gregorian is sung even once during the whole year, with the exception of Holy Week, perhaps.”²⁶⁰ Moreover, prejudice against chant was felt to be simply a product of ignorance, lack of exposure to chant and its profound beauty:

For many years I taught singing in poor schools in the country; the consequence was that secular songs were not sung in the fields, woods

²⁵⁶ Rome was somewhat jealous, however, attempting to centralize Cecilianism in a Roman “scuola Gregoriana” to be opened November 1880. See 1878 letter of de Lucca to Witt, Hayburn, 131-2.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 129.

²⁵⁸ Quoted in Daly, 13-14.

²⁵⁹ Franz Witt, *Der Zustand der Katholischen Kirchenmusik Zunächst in Altbayern (Oberbayern, Niederbayern und Oberpfalz)* (Regensburg: Verlag von Alfred Coppenrath, 1865), cited in Daly, 13.

²⁶⁰ Daly, 13.

or houses nearly so much as the Gregorian chant. . . . A reform is only possible by learning to know what is true church Music.²⁶¹

At precisely this time, the young priest at Tombolo and Salzano in Italy was also in love with the profound beauty of chant, and Giuseppe Sarto was also actively teaching it to the poor.

Though the Cecilians professed the ultimacy of Gregorian chant, they were often “accused” of focusing more on polyphony, and indeed in the early part of the nineteenth century, an intense revival of interest in the music of the sixteenth century, and in particular of Palestrina, took place in Germany and Austria. This “historicist” revival – a breaking with the developments of ongoing tradition to leap-frog back to a past idealized era – occurred both among leading Protestant musicians in the north, and among Catholics in the south, preeminently under Witt and the Caecilians. These two contemporary thrusts of the German Palestrina revival had different purposes and emphases, given their confessional contexts. But according to a recent study by James Garratt, both Catholics and Protestants proceeded from a common foundational understanding: that the very works of Palestrina himself represented “the paradigm of church music.”²⁶² The Romantic retrieval of Palestrina, this new “reception,” in part marked a rejection of the current style of church music, a refusal which echoed long-standing official concerns of the church: in the time-honored phrase, “composers no

²⁶¹ Daly, 13.

²⁶² James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German Romantic Imagination: Interpreting Historicism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 1. I am indebted to Professor Mary Frandsen for reference to this work, one of the most detailed – though localized – treatments of Cecilian activity to date.

longer upheld the *basic distinction between the sacred and the profane*, mixing elements of the operatic style with the church style.”²⁶³ The new reception however had concerns deeper than simply musical style: it marked an intentional, common judgment on the perceived spirit of the post-Enlightenment, early Romantic world. The possibility of a new church music based on “pure” contemporary faith came under high suspicion. Conversely, the Romantic imagination saw more than a “religious quality” embedded in Palestrina’s music: “its greatness stems from having been conceived by a *naiv* genius in an age of unreflective belief.”²⁶⁴ Garratt cites Winckelmann on art from this putative “golden age of Christianity”: “The interest of ancient works does not merely lie in their pastness, in their great antiquity in itself . . . but in the serious, noble and religious character of their age, which, at least by composers of works of sacred music, is expressed so unmistakably.”²⁶⁵ For Friedrich Schlegel, then, the problem of modern spirituality indicated a retrieval of past “mythologies”:

For Schlegel, the absence in modern times of the coherent and communal world-view that provided earlier artists with a firm foundation for their activity has the result that modern artists must reawaken older mythologies in order to provide their works with a substantial spiritual content. Such a modern mythology can only be gained by the revival of older Christian art and techniques,

²⁶³ Garratt, 37. Italics added. From a Felix Mendelssohn letter of 1835: “I have found, to my astonishment, that the Catholics, who have had music in their churches for several centuries, and sing a musical Mass every Sunday if possible . . . do not to this day possess one which can be considered even tolerably good, or in fact which is not actually distasteful and operatic. This is the case from Pergolese and Durante, who introduce the most laughable little trills into their ‘Gloria,’ down to the opera finales of the present day.” Wienandt, 122.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 50.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

since the modern artist, to secure such a foundation for his work,
must construct a similar relationship to the infinite.²⁶⁶

Though Schlegel represented a specifically Catholic viewpoint, Protestant commentators (such as E.T.A. Hoffman) shared this idealization of medieval Catholicism: that “the service of religion [was] the loftiest purpose of music” and “the paradigm of this union [was located] in medieval Italy.”²⁶⁷

What we see in this historical development is a lay reception *from below* which began to echo the musical concerns of the Catholic hierarchy of three hundred years earlier at Trent.²⁶⁸ The Protestant and Catholic receptions however differed in their teleologies. Both shared a Romantic apprehension of the power of music to contain and express both the divine and the demonic, and consequently of music’s power over human character for good or ill. As Garratt notes, some warned that “modern compositions have as detrimental an effect on the souls of listeners as poison would have on their bodies.”²⁶⁹

The most deadly poison is acclaimed under the exalted name of effect, this spasmodic, contorted, exaggerated, intoxicating, maddening trickery, unleashing everything evil in man and threatening eventually to destroy entirely music in its true sense.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Garratt, 48.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 50.

²⁶⁸ To say “from below” here is to say “not handed down from church hierarchy.” It should not imply that the Palestrina retrieval, or Cecilianism generally, was a “populist” movement. These movements were generally led by a cultural elite, though they had in part populist goals. See the comments of Howell above, p. 124, n. 253.

²⁶⁹ Garratt, 64.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., quoting Anton Friedrich Justus Thibaut, *Über Reinheit der Tonkunst*, ed. Raimond Heuler, Paderborn, 1907, p. 63.

For Protestants, then, the turn to the music of the past was for the purpose of “*Bildung* – the self-cultivation of the individual – and for *Volksbildung* – the cultural regeneration of the populace.”²⁷¹ Here Palestrina functions not primarily as liturgical icon but rather as a path to ethics, to be realized in the repertories of the *Singvereine*, the *Singakademien*, and even the Berlin *Domchor*.

For Catholics and specifically for Cecilians, however, the reception of Palestrina had to do primarily with worship. This reception was highly confessional, emphasizing the “specifically Catholic spirit” of Palestrina, and linked to the “dogmatic Catholicism of the period,” as Garratt says, part of the “militant Catholicism” of Pius IX.²⁷² Palestrina was received as a specifically Catholic voice, a return not only to Renaissance music but to the Catholic spirituality of that age, casting out from modern worship “the profane attractions of an artistic dictatorship from outside the Church,” in Carl Proske’s words.²⁷³ Within specifically Catholic and Cecilian circles, the reception of Palestrina was by no means uniform: church musicians and composers from Munich to Regensburg differed among themselves as to the precise degree of emulation necessary to capture the “true Catholic spirit.” The intentions of the ACV however were nothing less than to “reshape the entire world of church music,”²⁷⁴ and to that weighty end some essential convictions were shared:

²⁷¹ Garratt, 63.

²⁷² This discussion follows Garratt, 144-146.

²⁷³ Ibid., 141. Garrett cites Proske to the effect that “the style of Palestrina grew exclusively from the consecrated ground of the Church, and its innermost being is entirely governed by Catholicism.” Ibid., 142.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 144.

1. First and foremost the movement was about *obedience to existing church law*.
2. There is such a thing as *true church music*. The ground of that music is Gregorian chant, the “holy scriptures of church music.”²⁷⁵ Even Palestrina’s worth is based on his “miraculous transfiguration” (*wunderbare Verklärung*) of the chant.²⁷⁶
3. Music for worship undertakes a *functional role*: it serves specific purposes *within* the liturgy and is dictated by *liturgical* needs.

The import of this last principle was so strong for Witt that it relativized some artistic aspects of church composition. Not even all of Palestrina was suitable for liturgy, only that which was not overly prolix and did not overly obscure the text (especially suitable were the homophonic treatments). Moreover, compositions for church should target the abilities of those performing, in order to be beautiful and edifying: when this involved small church and rural choirs, for example, compositions should be technically simpler and accessible, until choirs are ready to progress to more lofty music. Witt’s position on this functionality was mirrored in the society’s *Vereins-Catalogs* of church compositions (first edition, 1870), which included many works of admittedly inferior artistic quality, in favor of their practicality. His approach was by no means shared by all Caecilians, however, among whom the balance between “liturgical function” and “artistic value” became divisive issues.²⁷⁷

In the above principles – the ultramontane reach of church authority, the positing of a discrete “true church music,” the locus of that ideal music in Gregorian chant and

²⁷⁵ Garratt, 142.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ This very much mirrors issues active today in the post-Vatican II church!

chant-inspired polyphony, and the circumscribing of church music to its liturgical function – we find remarkable forerunners to the ideas laid out in *TLS*.

2.4.3.3 *Caecilians in the United States*

The Caecilian movement in the United States, a “daughter” of the German movement, shared with Germany both a special papal approbation as well as extensive support among its national bishops. The sixth national convention of the US society, held in Milwaukee in 1879, authorized the publication of *A Brief Exposition of the Aims of the St. Cecilia Society in the United States*,²⁷⁸ which we will survey here in light of the appearance of *TLS* now a mere twenty-four years later. The *Brief Exposition* includes “A Collection of Ecclesiastical Ordinances in Regard to Singing during Divine Service” compiled by Rev. F. Otto Kornmuller, OSB, beginning from the early 1600s, which runs to some twenty-one pages. This legal prelude to the exposition of the society’s aims is significant for two reasons. First, the reception of the laws among American Catholics has been frustrated by a simple fact: “These laws are contained almost exclusively in books especially intended for priests; hence they are almost totally unknown to the general public.”²⁷⁹ Second, the Cecilians emphatically rest their *primary* warrant in that they are dutifully enforcing the accepted liturgical laws of the church.

By examining the general statutes of the Society, everyone will see that our only aim is the cultivation of church music according to the ordinances and the spirit of the Church. In general, our object is the accurate observance of the liturgy. All the liturgical

²⁷⁸ Published by the order of the Sixth Convention of the St. Cecilia Society, Milwaukee, WI, 1879.

²⁷⁹ *Brief Exposition*, 5.

chants should be given as the Church prescribes them *hic et nunc*.²⁸⁰

Such an appeal gave the society not only an itemized legal agenda to pursue, but a legalistic “cover” in their intention to exercise influence (especially as a lay organization) over church music practices. (The society acknowledged friction over its own reception: with the publication of its catalogues of “acceptable” church music, it “has been accused of being intolerant because it does not acknowledge anything to be ecclesiastical music unless it has given its approbation.”²⁸¹) The Caecilians rhetorically ask, “Can there be anything more beautiful, more sublime, than Catholic worship performed according to the spirit of the Church?” and one wonders whether the emphasis is on the music or on the obedience.

Two remaining objectives of the society are given as follows:

1. To “cultivate *above all* the Gregorian or choral chant. Choral chant is the principal object of our attention . . . [One] cannot restore the perfect liturgy without the most zealous cultivation of choral.”²⁸² Like Pius X shortly after them, the Cecilians sincerely felt that the “genuine ecclesiastical chant that the Church bestows so much care upon . . . ought to inflame the Catholics of America with the desire to execute it according to the intentions and spirit of the Church. . . [It enables] a divine worship that is really able to refresh and elevate heart and soul, and animate with renewed courage our drooping spirits.”²⁸³
2. To cultivate other choral music besides chant, presumably classical polyphony and its contemporary imitations, of good or ill repute.

²⁸⁰ *Brief Exposition*, 36.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 37. Even within the *Exposition* the society pontificates, “It is the duty of all to sing the entire chants as required by the liturgy. If, then, you do not wish to adopt Cecilian music, you have no alternative, you must sing choral [i.e., Gregorian chant]. But then if you confine yourselves to choral, we shall not object.” *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁸² *Brief Exposition*, 36. Italics added.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 39.

The *Exposition* then goes on to detail the means of obtaining their goals:

1. Meetings and public exhibitions as models of liturgical singing, in order to “gradually awaken in the minds of the people a purer taste for genuine church music.”²⁸⁴ “[I]t is our Cecilian festivals that have restored choral music to a position of honor,” it is claimed.²⁸⁵ Without such demonstrations, “the Society will effect little” in the way of popular reception.
2. Promotion of parochial Cecilian societies and singing schools.
3. Advocating obligatory musical training in the seminaries.
4. The exercise of an office of approbation over American church music, its repertoire and use, to be done by means of a “Board of Reference” composed of “men skilled in sacred music” and a catalogue published under their auspices.²⁸⁶
5. The list of “means” is concluded with three short additions:
 - a. congregational singing
 - b. “ecclesiastical manner of playing of the organ”
 - c. instrumental music (“as far as it is allowed by the Church.”)

The authors of the *Exposition* conclude with the curious statement that “almost nothing has been written on these subjects, [and] we think it unnecessary to say more about them. *We would only express our opinion that singing, by the congregation, has been too much neglected.*”²⁸⁷ In all the legislation cited by Fr. Kornmuller, a cornucopia of minute rubricism spanning almost three hundred years, there is not one word regarding congregational singing.

²⁸⁴ *Brief Exposition*, 36.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 38. Italics added.

Somehow in the stern declarations of the Cecilians, the topic seems to float to the surface as though from nowhere, as if it seems a good and proper idea on the face of it.

2.4.3.4 *A Voice from the Field*

Solesmes and the Cecilians represented the coalescing of interest among local groups of people concerned with matters of liturgy, liturgical music, and especially chant; and in the next section we will look at the increased attention forming at the central Vatican level. But there were also individual witnesses from the nineteenth century which not only furnish us with a clear picture of current practices, but reflect in a remarkable way ideas that would come to fruition only in the following century, in *TLS* and within the liturgical movement. Such a witness is provided by Right Rev. Louis Lootens, D.D., Bishop of Castalba and Vicar Apostolic of Idaho, who composed a volume of organ accompaniments for selected chants from the Roman Gradual.²⁸⁸ In the Introduction to his book of music, Bishop Lootens confirms other pictures of the current state of church music, in this case American: there is a virtual absence of Gregorian chant in liturgical practice, and hence a general ignorance of it. The use of Propers at mass has disappeared. There is a dearth of proper liturgical books to make Gregorian even possible (which his books seek to redress.) “Modern music,” which “every day transgresses” existing church rules, holds sway. Lootens feels that if the fathers of Trent had “been doomed to listen to the major part of more modern compositions,” they would have “expressed a far different

²⁸⁸ *Extracts from the Roman Gradual and other Liturgical Books, Used in the Morning Service in the Catholic Churches in the United States, with Full Accompaniments for the Organ.* New York: D. & J. Sadlier and Company, 1869.

opinion,” and suggests that “the question is being considered, at Rome” whether at the upcoming General Council (Vatican I) “modern music may be forever banished from our choirs.”²⁸⁹ The effect of modern music, even when “very grand and very artistically performed,” was to drive people to low masses, for the reason that “*the music prevented them from praying.*”²⁹⁰

A cynic might argue that Bishop Lootens had an interest in marketing his books for Gregorian accompaniment; nevertheless this voice from Idaho in the 1860s invokes a prescient array of liturgical principles in his wide-ranging Introduction:

1. *The Church’s liturgy is inherently musical.* “For the sacred music of the Church and the public Offices of the Church form an inseparable whole. They are one and the same thing.”²⁹¹
2. *The faithful should have a conscious participation in the liturgy.* At “those grand musical masses . . . the number is far larger than we might imagine of those to whom music affords distraction rather than edification, and who perhaps spend their time in church in a kind of sentimental dreaming that is not altogether piety.”²⁹²
3. *The faithful have a rightful role in joining in liturgical song.* The loss of Gregorian and the introduction of the modern idiom “has silenced (it is to be feared forever,) the voices of the people accustomed to take part and mingle in the Offices of the Church.”²⁹³
4. *The faithful should pray the mass, corporately.* “[O]ur assistance at public worship becomes a matter of private devotion, which every one pursues by himself,

²⁸⁹ *Prospectus*, p. 3-4.

²⁹⁰ Lootens, *Extracts*, 9.

²⁹¹ Lootens, “Introduction,” 17.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

as well as he may, as long as his efforts to pray without distraction are not hopelessly overpowered by the performances in the organ loft.”²⁹⁴

5. *The liturgy and its music must express liturgical time.* Rather than the rosary (citing a current practice), suitable hymns should accompany Corpus Christi processions. “Hence, all the sacred formulas of the Liturgy of the Church; all those Introits and Graduals; those hymns and verses, and Antiphons and Responsories of all kinds, which she has prepared in such variety, in order to make us enter into the true spirit of every one of her festivals . . . all those things, we repeat, are completely lost and have become useless to us. If the preacher does not allude to the object of the devotion of the day, . . . the faithful leave the church, not even knowing what feast or mystery was commemorated.”²⁹⁵
6. *The liturgy must be intelligible.* Lootens cites the French practice, where “every person goes to church not with a book of private devotion, but with his *Paroissien*: that is, a complete collection of all the offices of the Church, generally in Latin and French.”²⁹⁶ While this bishop steers away from “Congregational Services” in English and insists finally on the beauty of the mandated Latin, he insists too that people must be made acquainted with the services they attend: “In order to make it accessible to the people also, what is to prevent us from translating the Vespéral? This being done and every one being furnished with a copy . . .”²⁹⁷

For Bishop Lootens, as for Pius X, the legitimacy as well as the aesthetic appeal of official Catholic worship was unquestionable.

[W]e cannot often enough repeat it, the Church furnishes us with better means than any we can devise. There is nothing in the world, and there never has been anything, to compare with the beauty and majesty of her sacred offices . . . [or] the aesthetical magnificence of her Ceremonial. [A]nd after the Holy Sacraments which she ministers to us, she has nothing more venerable, nothing more attractive, no means better to entertain, in the Christian at large, a spirit of true and solid devotion; no safer

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 20-21.

²⁹⁵ Lootens, *Extracts*, 20.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 21.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 25.

road, in fine, to lead us to heaven than that of her sacred Liturgy.²⁹⁸

The liturgy could not stand alone in its magnificence if uncommunicated, however, and thus the burning question for both men was the *reception* of this vaunted inheritance by the very people of God for whom it was intended.

For both Lootens and Pius X as well, that reception among the people focused largely on Gregorian chant. This was “the only recognized and official musical language of the Catholic Church, . . . [and] it is owing to the non-introduction of the Gregorian Chant, that we never yet have been able to lift up our voices in perfect unison with that of the universal Church.”²⁹⁹ Beyond that official status and universality, however, lay a more personal claim that through the chant, the beauty and meaning of the church’s worship could find *an avenue, an ingress to faithful hearts*. It could be received. Chant could reverse the effects of modern music which not only undermined popular participation, but “banished from the public celebration of the Holy Mysteries, what formed precisely the distinguishing parts and individual features . . . of each festival, namely, the *Introit, Gradual, Offertory* and *Communion*.”³⁰⁰ “And would it be far-fetched,” concludes Lootens, “to trace to those . . . first a gradual loss of interest, on the part of the faithful, in ceremonies and festivals in which they were no longer allowed to raise their voices, and hence a corresponding decrease of piety and faith?”³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Lootens, Introduction, 7.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 8.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

2.4.4 Chant in the Nineteenth Century

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Gregorian chant was little on the “radar screen” of the church, if at all. Yet as the century wore on, chant increasingly became an issue in the church’s concerns over music, and by the end of the century it occupied center stage in a pitched battle between supporters of Solesmes and Regensburg. This building storm of controversy around plainsong issued in the resolution and synthesis of chant within a new formulation of music for the church, which was the accomplishment of *Tra le sollecitudini* and Pius X.

2.4.4.1 Documentary Evidence

Documentary evidence witnesses the steady crescendo of Gregorian issues through the nineteenth century:³⁰²

1. *Letter of Cardinal Zurla*, December 1824. Lengthy letter of the Vicar-general of Rome, on musical abuses. No mention whatsoever of chant.
2. *Edict of Pius VIII*, August 1830. Pius VIII’s (r.1829-30) major document on church music is a response to the Italian Society of St. Cecilia’s petition for recognition. Pius’ document is very lengthy, responding in great detail about dues, obligations and prerogatives among musicians; it says *not one word* regarding Gregorian chant.³⁰³
3. *Letter of Cardinal Odescalchi*, January 1835. Vicar-general of the Pope; addressing music in Rome, it re-news Zurla’s letter of 1824, and adds *nothing about chant*.

³⁰² This summary follows the discussion in Hayburn, chapter 6: “The Nineteenth Century,” 115-44.

³⁰³ Pius simply offers well-known categories in summing up his understanding of music: “. . . that in the sanctuary of God and court of heaven [music] may bear to everything sanctity and majesty; and in order that in the chant of the divine praises the listeners may be aroused to sorrow for their admitted guilt and to a sense of piety . . . “ Hayburn, 120-1.

4. *Spontini Report*, n.d. (?c.1840). At the behest of Pope Gregory XVI (probably in the early 1840's) the composer Gaspare Spontini (+1851) surveyed and made a report on music in Rome. The resulting document (no date extant) is an important witness to (sometimes well-embedded) practices in Rome. Bemoaning the "scandalous and frivolous" music of recent decades, including music in churches from the dance-halls of the night before, Spontini recommends by name specifically "the great Italian masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," the "innumerable treasures of superb classic compositions of the last [eighteenth] century," and modern compositions which are "beautiful, consoling, noble, grandiose, and full of religious feeling."³⁰⁴

He does mention by name the "true style of Gregorian music, and that of Palestrina" in the pontifical chapel – not commending them per se, but only as examples of a "*rigorous austerity*" which ought to be "ordained and enforced" elsewhere as an antidote to theatricality.

5. *Edict of Cardinal Patrizi*, August 1842. Attempting to stem the tide of instruments in church, Patrizi, vicar-general of Rome, allows "exclusively the music called 'a cappella.'" "A cappella" is not further delineated (though apparently it includes the organ); *no direct mention of chant is made*.
6. *Edict of Cardinal Patrizi*, November 1856. Noting that the rules he promulgated in the 1842 edict "have been entirely forgotten," Patrizi re-issues a letter at the behest of Pius IX. Repeating his wish "to have nothing employed in churches except purely vocal music in the Palestrina style," he recognizes that this has not worked out in practicality, and so goes on with the usual warnings against various secularisms. Gregorian chant *does* merit mention here: but only *as a substitution* (along with "some other decent style of music") for the "unbecoming rapidity" of the style into which the Introit of the Mass and the antiphons at Vespers have lapsed.
7. *Decree of November 1856*. A second decree immediately followed Patrizi's (at #6), instructing composers on the correct ecclesial style. *Not one word on Gregorian*.
8. *Multum ad commovendos animos*, December 1870. This document of Pius IX gives formal recognition to the German Association of St. Cecilia, organized in 1868 at Ratisbon. Pius affirms the need for reform in church music, and sets forth the statutes of the Society. The first goal in those statutes, as written by the Cecilians themselves, is "That the Gregorian or plain chant

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 125.

be everywhere cultivated.” Pius’ own sense of the purpose of chant, however, may have emerged somewhat differently at the Council.³⁰⁵

2.4.4.2 *Vatican I.*

With the convening of the first Vatican Council (1869-70), we enter into a new situation with regard to chant. Under siege in Italy and abroad, Pius IX looks to the centralizing of authority in Rome, and decrees “that the Roman liturgy was to be favorably adopted in almost all the churches, [while] he had in mind also to bring about uniformity in the matter of liturgical chant.”³⁰⁶ Thus, systematizing Gregorian chant was understood as an aspect of the greater objective of promulgating the Roman liturgy, certainly echoing the outlook and practice of Prosper Guéranger and the monks of Solesmes. In preparing the ground for such a chant initiative, Pius has Fr. Loreto Jacovacci of the Propaganda College in Rome send a letter to all the world’s bishops:

After the resolution of these preliminary questions, I would indeed be of the opinion that a reformation of Gregorian chant should be undertaken as quickly as possible. The church has wisely directed that this chant be joined to her liturgy. Hence it should be necessary to restore the school of Gregorian chant to its pristine splendor and to urge clerics more forcefully to use it constantly.³⁰⁷

To implement a general uniformity, Fr. Jacovacci’s letter goes on to “propose that a uniform grammar of pure plainsong should be compiled, and that it should be approved by the Holy See.”³⁰⁸ This summons for a Vatican edition of chant books of course

³⁰⁵ (See following.)

³⁰⁶ Romita, quoted in Hayburn, 151. Whatever Pius IX’s motives, there were indeed a plethora of chant books in usage during the nineteenth century. See *ibid.*, 145-46.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 149.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

eventuated in the ill-begotten Ratisbon *Graduale* of 1873, re-printing what F.X. Haberl believed to be the original Palestrinian chant notations.

2.4.4.3 Ratisbon Controversy

The efforts of Fr. Haberl and his Bavarian printer Frederick Pustet to receive and maintain Vatican approval of their editions, and the controversy that surrounded the Ratisbon / Pustet editions, led to an enormous number of documents in the latter part of the nineteenth century referencing Gregorian chant. Two points are important, for our purposes, in these developments:

1. The concerns of Pius IX lie toward *uniformity* of chant in Roman use, not necessarily *universality*: he does not especially urge the *use* of Gregorian, nor advocate Gregorian over other (“sacred”) music as privileged in the church.
2. Looking for every source of authority, the chant to be used is touted as the “*true* Gregorian chant . . . which the Roman Catholic church has always kept, and therefore, by reason of tradition, may be held to be more in agreement with that which the Sovereign Pontiff, Saint Gregory the Great, had introduced into the sacred liturgy.”³⁰⁹

Thus the various Pustet publications are variously “enthusiastically approved,” “heartily recommended,” or “vehemently commended” to the world’s bishops, though never outright imposed. In commending the Ratisbon Gradual in 1873, we note again how Pius IX states his interests: “. . . especially because it is our earnest desire that in all things that pertain to Sacred Liturgy, particularly in chant, *the very same procedure be followed* in all places and Dioceses which the Roman church uses.”³¹⁰ The Congregation of Sacred Rites

³⁰⁹ Hayburn, 154.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 155.

aligns itself with the same motive, “solicitous also for the consistent performance of Gregorian chant.”³¹¹ And Leo XIII as a new pope in 1878 gives Pustet a letter of approval, affirming “It has always been a concern of the Supreme Pontiffs to consider the dignity of sacred music and *even more to provide for uniformity* in Gregorian chant.”³¹² Indeed, when questions over the authenticity of the Ratisbon edition began to surface soon after (from French and Belgian editors of chant books, as well as from Solesmes), Leo’s response is remarkably equivocating:

[W]e could not but recommend this work [i.e., the Ratisbon edition]... in view especially of the enormous expenditures which had to be made to undertake it and bring it to a conclusion. However, there is no need to infer that all Cathedral churches have been forced to procure copies of that edition.³¹³

But as the chant controversy continued to heat up, driven by the ongoing research at Solesmes and the defensiveness at Regensburg, the Vatican suddenly dug its feet in. Perhaps the last straw was the Arezzo Congress of September 1882, attended by parties interested in debating the chant issues (including a canon of the Cathedral of Treviso, Fr. Giuseppe Sarto). When the Congress issued a resolution favoring the Solesmes ideals (an edition “based on ancient tradition, as found in the codices of the earliest manuscripts”³¹⁴) Rome replied with the decree *Romanorum pontificum* which brutally condemned Arezzo.

³¹¹ Ibid., 156.

³¹² Ibid., 157. Italics added.

³¹³ Hayburn, 158.

³¹⁴ This was to become a “code” phrase for the Solesmes method. In *TLS* the phrase is “so happily restored to its original perfection and purity by recent study.” See Pierre Combe, OSB, *The Restoration of Gregorian Chant* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003) 222, 225; 232-4.

The decree contains language which indicates that the problem was really more about authority than authenticity:

Meanwhile, several admirers of ecclesiastical music began to inquire more deeply as to the original form of Gregorian chant . . . [and] appeared to neglect the recent ordinances of the Apostolic See and its wishes. . . . [T]hey continued to promote their views still more actively in a Congress [Arezzo] of upholders of ecclesiastical chant . . . not without giving offence to those who justly deem that the authority of the Holy See is to be exclusively followed in the method and uniformity of its chant not less than in other matters affecting the liturgy.³¹⁵

2.4.4.4 Leo's Final Documents

Two major statements on church music were published toward the end of Leo XIII's reign; separated by ten years, they show a remarkable difference in regard to chant, just as surely as they point to the influence of Cardinal Sarto of Venice. The earlier document, the *Ordinatio quoad sacram musicam*³¹⁶ was issued by the Congregation of Sacred Rites on September 25, 1884. This is a lengthy list of regulations which address the many common current complaints. Notably, for enforcement it directs the establishment in every diocese of a Commission of St. Cecilia, including a "Diocesan Inspector of Sacred Music." (And in a measure almost laughably out-of-touch, the document warns: "These regulations shall be affixed to a board in the church placed near the organist, that they may never be transgressed for any reason whatsoever."³¹⁷) In the wake of all that has transpired over chant during the century, in the immediate aftermath of Arezzo and *Romanorum*

³¹⁵ Hayburn, 160-161.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 137-140.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 140.

pontificum, in its detailed discussion of what music is fit for the liturgy, it is nothing less than astonishing that this major decree says *not one word about Gregorian chant* (a fact which supports the contention above that the prior flurry of chant regulation has to do with uniformity, not usage.)

The second document, *De musica sacra*, was promulgated ten years later, on July 7, 1894. In preparation for this document, Leo had questionnaires sent to the hierarchy around the world, as well as to a number of renowned musicians. Bishop Giuseppe Sarto's reply came as he was leaving the Diocese of Mantua to become Patriarch of Venice, in a remarkable document known as the Votum of 1893.³¹⁸ Here Sarto sets forth the ideas – and indeed verbatim texts – which will form significant portions of the Pastoral Letter of Venice (1895) and indeed the *motu proprio* of 1903. The Votum, as Hayburn says, is their “true predecessor.”³¹⁹ The key idea in the Votum connects chant to the purposes of the liturgy: if the three “qualities of the liturgy” can be said to be *sanctity*, *artistry* (“goodness and excellence of form”) and *universality*, then whatever sacred music is, it should “possess [these qualities] in the best possible grade.”³²⁰ And now the central connection is made: “*These three qualities are found most perfectly in Gregorian chant, which is therefore the proper chant of the Catholic church.*”³²¹

³¹⁸ (See below.)

³¹⁹ On de Santi's actual writing, see Hayburn, 203-4.

³²⁰ The *motu proprio* will phrase this: “sacred music must therefore eminently possess the qualities which belong to the liturgical rites.”

³²¹ Hayburn, 224. Italics added.

It is impossible to know precisely the influence of Cardinal Sarto's votum, or indeed of Guéranger and the ongoing Solesmes enterprise – but chant moves from “non-existent” in the 1884 document to the top of the list in Leo's revision ten years later. We cite here the first two articles of *De musica sacra*, 1894³²²:

Article 1. Every musical composition harmonizing with the spirit of the accompanying sacred function and religiously corresponding with the meaning of the rite and the liturgical words moves the faithful to devotion, and is therefore worthy of the House of God.

Article 2. Such is the Gregorian chant, which the church regards as truly its own, and which is accordingly the only one adopted in the liturgical books of which she approves.

Moreover, Article 5 states that when other music such as polyphony cannot be well performed, it ought to be replaced by chant. Later the document harks back to Trent in mandating that “Bishops should impose upon clerics the obligation of studying Plain chant.”³²³ The next step awaits only the accession of Sarto to the papacy in 1903.

2.4.5 Enactment and Enforcement

The history of church music reform, almost for the entire history of Christianity, could be said to be one of regulation, non-adherence, and frustrated repetition. When laws are laid down, they seem to be largely ignored or disingenuously interpreted. One sees the same matters brought up time and again, re-stated always “so that there can be no ‘misunderstanding’ this time,” and threats and penalties are attached with ever-increasing severity. In the seventeenth century, for example, Alexander VII's *Piae sollicitudinis* (1657)

³²² Given in *ibid.*, 141.

³²³ Hayburn, 142.

makes the (by no means unusual) threats of excommunication, permanent loss of employment, and even corporal punishment. It suggests that musicians, at least in Rome, made a practice of skirting regulations by crafty interpretations: “Let them be observed inviolably by all to whom they pertain, now, and for the future, of all or whatever state, grade, order, or condition. These decrees must not be judged and defined in any other manner . . .”³²⁴

The problem of compliance was never greater than in the nineteenth century. Particularly with the re-coalescing Caecilian movement, reform efforts were underway in no small measure, and the church’s hierarchy was busy as well with attempts at reform and regulation. The 1893 Votum of Cardinal Sarto of Venice says of abuses,

The church repeatedly and vehemently condemned them during this century. . . . Notwithstanding these condemnations, to which others were added from local and diocesan Councils and many Bishops, this style of music continues to be used . . . the energetic action of the church almost [goes] unheeded.³²⁵

The hierarchy largely attempted to control music through Caecilian Societies/Committees or Diocesan Commissions on Music. Leo XIII prescribed a Special Commission, under the title of St. Cecilia, for *every* diocese, including a “Diocesan Inspector of Sacred Music.”³²⁶ These groups were to have power of approval over the employment of musicians and actual music used in the parishes: a common proposal was to have a roster of registered musicians (including singers) and a list of approved compositions (“General

³²⁴ Hayburn, 77.

³²⁵ Ibid., 208.

³²⁶ See Hayburn, 139.

Catalogue of Sacred Music”) for use.³²⁷ Leo’s Inspector-President was to have authority to “supervise the performance on the spot, request to inspect the music already or about to be performed, and examine into the matter of their compliance . . . ”³²⁸ Priests, moreover, were to be held accountable for the music provided by their musicians; disobedience would be “punished without compassion.”³²⁹

Not surprisingly, these efforts met with considerable resistance. First, it was probably true that many clergy accepted “poor” music, simply from their own lack of training; and this is why seminary training in music had been a continual concern since Trent (particularly one of Sarto’s). As for musicians, Fr. Angelo De Santi rhapsodized in the 1893 Votum about “the spirit of obedience. Our duty is that of rational obedience.”³³⁰ But Spontini noted instead the

fatal source of all the evil . . . in the inveterate and furious discord which divides the musical societies and institutions of Rome. Discord between the Congregation and Academy of St. Cecilia . . . and the Papal Chapel . . . the choir of St. Peter’s, of St. John’s, and of St. Mary Major’s . . . wielding their so-called privileges . . . and all these divided interests engender lawsuits and dissensions . . .³³¹

After writing a series of articles on church music for the *Civiltà cattolica*, at Leo XIII’s request, from 1887 to 1892, the same Fr. De Santi “was forbidden to speak further on church music because of the vehement controversy at this time between those who wished

³²⁷ Hayburn, 126.

³²⁸ Ibid., 139.

³²⁹ Ibid., 133.

³³⁰ Ibid., 211.

³³¹ Ibid., 123.

reform and those who fought against it.”³³² It is apparent that stringent enforcement which was attempted in places, but only resulted in acrimony: De Santi, further in the 1893 Votum, counseled musicians that “*fortiter* should be accompanied by *suaviter*, which is a fundamental rule for any reform.”³³³ Leo’s last decree commented, tellingly, “As to what concerns sacred music, discussion is permissible provided the laws of charity are observed, and that no one constitutes himself master and judge of others.”³³⁴

But in summing up the numerous nineteenth-century documents regarding church music, Hayburn is of the considered opinion that “It is difficult to evaluate correctly the effect of these documents . . . *It is certain that many musicians paid little or no attention to them.*”³³⁵ It was because of this reality that the future Pius X held a major concern that the laws of *TLS* be enforced. As John Singenberger at the time noted wryly of Rome, “*Hic leges dantur . . . foris observantur*”: “Here the laws are given . . . they are obeyed elsewhere.”³³⁶

³³² Hayburn, 200. Silence was lifted during the reign of Pius X, in January 1904, when the articles again began appearing.

³³³ Ibid., 210.

³³⁴ Ibid., 142.

³³⁵ Ibid. Italics added.

³³⁶ Ibid., 143.

2.5 Pius X and *Tra le sollecitudini*

“We are going to have good music in the Church.”

– The newly-elected Pope Pius X

That Giuseppe Sarto, upon becoming Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, chose as his first order of business the reform of church music comes as no surprise. Of the many lofty objectives and diverse dimensions of his pastoral ministry, church music was never far from his mind. It was, as Thornton asserts, the “apple of his eye.”³³⁷

2.5.1 Early Ministry

Undoubtedly the stress which Sarto laid on *teaching* in the ministry mirrored a recognition of his own early musical experience. Hayburn relates that Fr. Pietro Jacuzzi, a young priest in Sarto’s home parish in Riese, particularly took an interest in teaching music to Giuseppe as a boy, including rigorous instruction in music theory, applied music, and in understanding and evaluating the music of the Church “as an aid to worship.” As a youth he is said to have formed a singing group at his parish, the *cantores fanciulli*. In seminary at Padua, he took the required curriculum course in Gregorian chant, assisted the musical director in various tasks, and so demonstrated a love of music that as a senior he was put in charge of the seminarians’ chant:

Since he did so well in the course, and since his superiors were aware of his passion for music they made him chant director over the seminarians in his last year of theology. From that time on he had

³³⁷ Thornton, 26-7; 150.

been initiated into the role of chapel-master, and was to be involved in organizing the Scholae.³³⁸

In his first parish assignment after ordination, at Tombolo, the young Fr. Sarto organized a parish choir; yet his interest even then was in getting the congregation to take part in the singing, and he experimented with different musical settings, finally feeling that Gregorian chant worked best. To that end, he organized a school for the teaching of chant.

As pastor at Salzano (1867-75), Fr. Sarto's increased duties did not lessen his interest in the parish music, nor in facilitating popular *lay* participation in the liturgy via music. Here too he introduced the congregation – including the children – to active Gregorian singing, while forming a choir for the more difficult chants. One biographer maintains the popularity and skill with which Gregorian was embraced in this parish. It was here at Salzano, says Hayburn, that Sarto became acquainted with the chant activities of Dom Guéranger and the Solesmes monks. A mark of his continuing interest in Solesmes and chant issues was his attendance, during his next appointment as a Canon of Treviso, at the Arezzo Congress in 1882.

2.5.2 Synodal Decrees of Mantua

In November 1884, Fr. Sarto was consecrated Bishop of Mantua by Pope Leo XIII in Rome. He served as bishop there from 1884 to 1893, now able to implement his musical vision diocesan-wide. At the diocesan seminary he formed a schola cantorum, drew up a music curriculum and taught solfège himself (along with rebuilding the entire

³³⁸ Hayburn, 196.

institution!) While at Mantua he convened a Diocesan Synod in 1888. The resulting Synodal Decrees contained four points about music which were not only his first official legislation, but “the first expression of Bishop Sarto’s evaluation of the problem of Church music reform.”³³⁹ These four points would re-appear in subsequent decrees:

Synodal Decrees of Mantua (1888)

1. On the necessity of musical and liturgical training for seminarians.
2. On not using bands for processions; or that their players will not play for dances.
3. (Referring to the CSR document of September 1884, which made no mention of chant):
 - a) “Let the Pastors know that the music that more than any other will conform with the sacred functions is the Gregorian chant. Therefore they should by all means see to it that this chant be used in Church.”
 - b) Employ music which is “really ecclesiastical”
 - c) Keep out instruments, especially bands.
4. Women are forbidden in either vocal or instrumental performance.

While at Mantua, Bishop Sarto mentored the young Lorenzo Perosi, sending him both to Regensburg and Solesmes, centers of chant. Perhaps indicating a preference for Solesmes and its approach, Sarto wrote to Perosi concerning the French Benedictines:

Just at the mention of the Vespers you heard those venerable monks chant, you have made the desire grow in me to hear the Lord praised like that in Italy as well. There will be a long wait for that, but I hope I will not die without having tasted its fruits.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ Hayburn, 200.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

2.5.3 Votum of 1893

Leo XIII had issued, through the Congregation for the Sacred Rites, the document on church music in September 1884³⁴¹ which made no mention of Gregorian chant. Now ten years later he wished to revise that decree, and asked for episcopal and professional input. Giuseppe Sarto, now a Cardinal and awaiting his patriarchate of Venice, issued a reply through the collaboration and scholarship of his friend Fr. Angelo De Santi, SJ.³⁴² This reply, the Votum of 1893, is of immense importance relative to the development of Sarto's thought: it is the first of the future pope's three great documents on music (along with the 1895 Pastoral Letter of Venice [PL], and *Tra le sollecitudini*), and it essentially lays the foundations of the later decrees. A summary of its provisions is given below, but three points are of cardinal importance:

1. The Votum gives the following *principles* for sacred music, stating that music must “fully correspond” to two goals:³⁴³
 - a. The *General Goal* of the Liturgy (viz., the classic two-part formulation):
 - i. the honor of God
 - ii. the sanctification and edification of the faithful
 - b. The *Particular Goal* of chant and music:
 - i. “enhancing of the splendor and the decorum” of liturgy
 - ii. “adding of more efficacy to the sacred text”

³⁴¹ *Ordinatio quoad sacram musicam*. See above, pp. 114, 143.

³⁴² It is certain De Santi was largely responsible for the content, although it received Sarto's editing and without a doubt reflected his outlook. See Hayburn, 203-4; 219-220. On the role and influence of Fr. De Santi, see Combe, *Restoration of Gregorian Chant*, 135-7; 150-165.

³⁴³ Hayburn, 205.

2. The document contains the first expression, which was to follow prominently in *PL* and *TLS*, of the “*Three Qualities*” of sacred Music and the “*Two Musics*” that possess them.
 - Three Qualities
 - a. *Sancta Sanctae*: nothing profane, theatrical, vulgar, trivial
 - b. Correctness of Art: only “true art” can inspire the hearer
 - c. Universality: as one law of belief, so one form of prayer.
 - Two Musics (which correspond fully and perfectly to the *Three Qualities*)
 - a. Gregorian chant: the “ideal model of true sacred music.” The only chant which the Church calls “her own.”
 - b. Classical Polyphony, particularly of the Roman School. Palestrina the apogee.
3. The *people’s active participation* in music receives a mention in the Votum: “that they may take a new part at the Solemn Mass and at the Divine Office, as was the ancient practice.” Though this reference is buried deep in the text of Part III³⁴⁴ (not surprising, given the Papal destination of the document), and does not find a place in Leo’s ensuing edict, it is crucial because of what it reveals of Sarto’s own views.

The overall impact of music in liturgy, as text joined to melody, again is seen to devolve around the people:

When this is the case, the faithful have a greater incentive to devotion, and they are better disposed to receive in themselves the fruits of grace. These fruits of grace are received when the sacred mysteries are solemnly celebrated in a fitting manner.³⁴⁵

2.5.3.1 Votum (Part 1): General Considerations

This document has three sections, the first of which is summarized here; the second section gives practical ideas for enactment; and the third section, a thirty-paragraph

³⁴⁴ Hayburn, 225.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 205.

“Instruction on Sacred Music,” was transferred almost verbatim to the *motu proprio*, and will be treated there.³⁴⁶

- Authority of the Holy See over Liturgy.
- Preeminent role of Tradition: carries weight in the Church, applies to music
- Music must “fully correspond to the general goal of the liturgy,” and to the “particular goal which the church has in mind for chant and music.” [see above, #2.]
- Three qualities of music, and two specific kinds of music, best fulfill the traditions and principles of the Church. [see above, #3.]
- Only Gregorian Chant, and after that Classical Polyphony, are fit as *models*. Other musics are “more sacred and more liturgical” only insofar as they “approach in inspiration and taste” this chant and Roman polyphony.
- Kerygmatic importance of example of Rome; detriment of bad example
 - a. Modern music is not a fit model; Church has always “maintained a negative approach.” Following the “judgment of art and history,” church tolerates but does not sanction modern music.
 - b. Theatrical-style music is most in contradiction to the spirit of the Church’s liturgy.
- First condition for church music: express the feeling of the sacred text.
- These do not justify liturgical usage:
 - a. Facility of execution
 - b. Popularity / enjoyment
- Need for seminary training in arts

The major author of this document, the Jesuit Angelo De Santi, was a well-known figure in Rome. Whether through the influence of his five-year-long series in *Civiltà Cattolica* on “correct ideas on Church music” (at the request of the pope), or indirectly

³⁴⁶ For text, see Hayburn, 205-212.

through the Patriarch-elect of Venice and the Votum, Leo's 1894 decree gave Gregorian chant pride of place.

2.5.4 Pastoral Letter of Venice (1895)

True to form, as Patriarch of Venice Cardinal Sarto actively sought music reform just as he had in previous cures. Hayburn gives a summary:

He instituted at the seminary a course in Gregorian chant . . . He organized in his Cathedral Church of St. Mark the alternated psalmody of Vespers, with men's and children's voices. He forbade the presence of women in choirs, and he likewise forbade the use of pianos and noisy instruments in church. He prohibited the use of a popular setting of the *Tantum Ergo*, because it had been sung to a theatrical melody.³⁴⁷

At several great ceremonial occasions, he successfully carried off the use of plainsong and Palestrina amid great throngs of people. Seeking to implement Leo XIII's new 1894 *Regolamento*, Sarto issued a Pastoral Letter to Venice in 1895 which was to be the second of his two great documents on music. Nothing is startlingly new here; but in the process of re-stating principles and "recycling" many of the time-honored complaints about church music practice, Sarto (again through the authorship of De Santi) makes the following statements which both embellish and re-cast with new polish the thought about music:

1. Music stands in an "*intimate union* with the liturgy and the liturgical text," and should therefore "*participate in the highest degree* in the qualities proper to it": namely, the famous trio of 'sanctity, Correctness of Art, and Universality."³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Hayburn, 212.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 213. Italics added.

2. In spite of this “intimate union,” it must be “regarded as a very grave abuse sedulously to be avoided that the liturgy in the sacred functions be made to appear as something secondary, and, as it were, at the service of the music, whereas the music ought rather to be a part of the liturgy and its humble servant.”³⁴⁹
3. The principles of music in liturgy are given the authority of the Fathers, the Councils, the Popes, and Sacred Congregation of Rites, and “the very nature of things.” [!] Those principles are again given as:
 - a. *General*: honor of God, edification of the faithful
 - b. *Particular*: In a re-formulation, the “special aim” of sacred music is “to move the faithful to devotion by means of melody, and to dispose them to receive with greater readiness the fruits of grace proper to the holy mysteries solemnly celebrated.”³⁵⁰
4. The importance of *text* is reinforced further on, in the discussion of instruments: “[T]he music for the Church is, strictly speaking, *purely vocal music* . . . As the singing should have the principal place, the organ or orchestra should merely sustain it and never smother it.”³⁵¹
5. There is increased emphasis on the *beauty* of Chant and Polyphony: “the sublime harmonies of the ecclesiastical chant, holy and artistic, and of a nature calculated to raise us above the miseries of this earth, and give us a foretaste of the beauties of the songs of heaven.”³⁵²

Moreover, Sarto claims the beauty of “real church music” has as much appeal to people as the profane: “[T]here is altogether too much abuse of the word ‘people’ – the people in reality show themselves to be far more reliable and devout than is generally believed, they appreciate sacred music

³⁴⁹ Hayburn, 217.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 213. A bit further on, Sarto waxes eloquent on the value of music: “Besides, you are aware how external cult contributes to stimulate piety and devotion; and among the actions of cult a most powerful part is played by the chant, which, according to St. Bernard ‘in the Church it makes glad the minds of men, gives delight to the blasé, prods on the sluggish, brings sinners to contrition; for no matter how hard may be the hearts of worldings, they are drawn together to a love of devotion once they have heard the sweetness of the Psalms.’ But, if we are to have these salutary effects, it is necessary that the chant be as the Church prescribes.” Hayburn, 218.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 217. Italics added.

³⁵² Ibid., 214. Invoking the aesthetic appeal of the music here is a bit inconsistent. Earlier, “the theatrical style” has been criticized because “its end is the pleasure of sense, and hence it aims merely at musical effect.”

and they do not cease to frequent the churches in which it is executed.”³⁵³
Indeed the Venice letter is concluded with a peroration to beauty:

O venerable priests, let us not make ourselves guilty of this great sacrilege, and let Venice, so long the over of all that is beautiful in art, be for the future, as in the ways of her greatest splendor, the lover of sacred music, so that all who visit our churches and assist at our sacred functions may repeat “How lovely, O Lord, are Thy Tabernacles! My soul desires and fairs after the halls of the Lord.”³⁵⁴

6. Sarto in this document does not refer to the direct participation of the people in chant. But he does make a much more fundamental statement about their active participation in liturgy generally. His argument is that the elaborate music at High Mass creates the impression of its being some kind of “parallel Mass” (both to priest at the altar and to people in the nave) in which one is not involved. Thus the *Missa cantata*, which is the actual parish Mass, is thought not to satisfy one’s obligation; “and the clergy, almost persuaded of the profanation of such Masses with music, help confirm the false opinion; and you will find that in almost all the churches a Low Mass is celebrated during the course of the Solemn Mass – another argument to induce the people to leave the temple at any part of the Solemn Mass, although that is, as a rule, especially offered up for them.”³⁵⁵

Yet while at Venice, Sarto penned a letter to the Bishop of Padua in which he painted the remarkable vision that would find expression in *Tra le sollecitudini*:

This is what must be urged: the Gregorian chant and the means of making it popular. Or if I could only make the faithful sing the *Kyrie*, the *Gloria*, the *Credo*, the *Sanctus*, and the *Agnus Dei*, like they sing the Litanies and the *Tantum Ergo*. That would be to me the finest triumph sacred music could have, for it is in really taking part in the liturgy that the faithful will preserve their devotion. I would take the *Tantum Ergo*,

³⁵³ Hayburn, 215. Sarto here references the great public celebration of the centenary feasts in the Basilica of St. Mark, “where, for four whole days, sacred music in the strictest sense, consisting of Gregorian and polyphonic chant, was executed, and the people assisted with enthusiasm and devotion.” (ibid.)

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 218.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 216. Cardinal Patrizi, vicar-general of Rome, orders in 1856: “To prevent the irreverences, which have occurred by persons listening to the music with their backs to the altar in order to stare at the singers and the other executants in the tribune over the church door, we order . . . that the executants . . . be out of sight.” (Ibid., 135).

the *Te Deum*, and the Litanies sung by the people over any piece of polyphony.³⁵⁶

2.5.5 *Tra le sollecitudini* (1903)

“We are going to have good music in the Church.”

So said Pius X to Don Perosi soon after his elevation to the papacy.³⁵⁷ It was with a sense of urgency that the new pope addressed this matter so close to his heart, recognizing music as “one of the commonest of abuses, one of the most difficult to uproot.”³⁵⁸ The “Waltzing Masses, kettledrums, trumpets and agonizing sopranos emulating the cadenzas and drama of La Scala”³⁵⁹ had been able, he writes to the Cardinal vicar-general of Rome, “to elude the will of the Church and to continue year after year in the same regrettable manner.” The situation, he simply states, “has become intolerable.”³⁶⁰

“Tra le sollecitudini del l’ufficio pastorale”:³⁶¹ “among the cares of the pastoral office,” Pius X asserts at the beginning of the 1903 *motu proprio*, is “certainly to maintain and increase the *beauty of the house of God*.” Pius places all that follows, it seems, under the rubric of beauty. He desires “to reprove and condemn everything in the music of divine

³⁵⁶ Hayburn, 213.

³⁵⁷ Thornton, 150.

³⁵⁸ TLS Introduction. Citations of TLS in this chapter follow translations in Hayburn, 222-231.

³⁵⁹ Thornton, 108.

³⁶⁰ Pius X to Cardinal Pietro Respighi. Hayburn, 232-33.

³⁶¹ The Italian version is the official text; a Latin version followed soon after, entitled “*Inter plurimas pastoralis officii sollicitudines*.” ASS 36 (1904) 387-95. In 1947 Romita published a new Latin translation, in parallel text with the Italian. F. Romita, *Jus Musicae Liturgicae* (Roma 1947) 290-301.

worship that does not agree with the right principles so often laid down,”³⁶² and later elucidates these principles as: 1) the “very sacred object for which any art is put to the service of religion,” and 2) the “necessity of only offering to God things that are good, or rather, as far as possible, things that are perfect.” Summing up, “the laws of the Church concerning sacred music are nothing but an immediate application of these two fundamental principles.”³⁶³ It appears that this will be yet another papal appeal grounded in aesthetics – the “beauty and grave decorum” of the House of God and its rites. Yet before turning to the body of the *motu proprio*, Pius (still not out of line with tradition) places the entire *raison d’être* for the regulation of music in service of the reception of faith: “Our *first and most ardent wish* is that a true Christian spirit flourish and be kept always by the faithful,”³⁶⁴ and it is out of “solicitude” for this Spirit that attention to “holiness and dignity” in the churches proceeds. Yet as this sentence continues, it moves into fatefully new ground: “. . . the churches in which Our people assemble in order to acquire that spirit from its first and most indispensable source, by *taking an active part* in the sacred mysteries and in the solemn public prayers of the Church.”³⁶⁵ This *parte più attiva* of TLS, as *actuosa participatio*, establishes a seminal trajectory. As Aymans points out, “Both Pius XI and Pius XII repeated the idea and pressed it more urgently, thus enabling Vatican 2 to

³⁶² TLS Introduction.

³⁶³ Pius X to Cardinal Respighi. Hayburn, 232.

³⁶⁴ TLS Introduction. Italics added.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. Italics added.

reap the harvest of the previous 60 years of development.”³⁶⁶ Finally, “[a]t the heart of Vatican II’s Liturgy Constitution,” says Keith Pecklers, SJ, “was one fundamental principle: full, conscious, and active liturgical participation for the whole mystical body of Christ.”³⁶⁷

Following this latent bombshell in the Introduction to *TLS*, the first paragraph of the Instruction contains more loaded phrases that were to live on in the future:

I. General Principles

1. Sacred music, being an integral part of the liturgy, is directed to the general object of this liturgy, namely, the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful. It helps to increase the beauty and splendor of the ceremonies of the Church, and since its chief duty is to clothe the liturgical text, which is presented to the understanding of the faithful, with suitable melody, its object is to make that text more efficacious, so that the faithful through this means may be the more roused to devotion, and better disposed to gather to themselves the fruits of grace which come from the celebration of the sacred mysteries.³⁶⁸

Pius begins with the classic formulation of the object of the liturgy, the bi-partite “glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.” But in introducing this well-worn axiom, a significant phrase was used: sacred music is referred to as “being an *integral*

³⁶⁶ Aymans, “Continuity and Development,” 239-40. cf. Pius XI, *Divini Cultus*, n. IX: “In order that the faithful may take a more active part in divine worship, let that portion of the chant which pertains to the Gregorian be restored to popular use. It is very necessary that the faithful taking part in sacred ceremonies should not do so as mere outsiders or mute spectators, but as worshippers thoroughly imbued with the beauty of the liturgy . . . so that they may sing alternately with the priest and the scholae, according to the prescribed rule: in this event we should not find the people making only a murmur or even no response at all to the public prayers of the liturgy, either in Latin or in the vernacular.” Hayburn, 331.

³⁶⁷ Keith F. Pecklers, SJ, “40 Years of Liturgical Reform: Shaping Roman Catholic Worship for the 21st Century.” *Worship* 79 no. 3 (May 2005) 194-209, here 197.

³⁶⁸ *TLS* I.1.

part of the solemn liturgy.”³⁶⁹ This phrase would live on into *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, being expanded to “*necessary or integral part* of the solemn liturgy.”³⁷⁰

The second aspect of this paragraph which “jumps off the page” is the clear enunciation of the principle of the “*chief duty*” of sacred music: that of “clothing the liturgical text . . . with suitable melody.” That is, even though music functions aesthetically (it has just been said that music “helps to increase the beauty and splendor of the ceremonies . . .”), it finds its *essential* task in service to the word: again not for the purpose of beauty *per se*, but to aid the disposition of the faithful to the fruits of the liturgy. Church music had been described in the past as “essentially vocal,” but this formulation was generally intended to rein in wayward instrumentalists, and never given such a prominent status as principle.³⁷¹ Pius X however, raises the primacy of text (and the emphasis on intelligibility) to the level of principle in *TLS*, with attendant consequences:

16. Since the singing must always be the chief thing, the organ and the instruments may only sustain and never crush it.

In the *motu proprio* Pius states one further general principle, asserting the preeminent nature of liturgy itself over music’s role as the “*humilis ancilla liturgiae*,” the “humble

³⁶⁹ The original Italian reads: “La musica sacra, come *parte integrante della solenne liturgia*, ne partecipa il fine generale, che è la gloria di Dio e la santificazione dei fedeli.”

³⁷⁰ SC contains its famous formulation at the opening of Chapter VI, n.112: “Musica traditio Ecclesiae universae thesaurum constituit pretii inaeestimabilis, inter ceteras artis expressiones excellentem, eo praesertim quod ut cantus sacer qui verbis inhaeret *necessariam vel integram* liturgiae sollemnis *partem* efficit.” (italics added) *Inter Plurimas* translated Pius’ *parte integrante* as “pars integrans,” but the Romita 1947 translation gave “pars necessaria.” It is suggested that the Romita version may have influenced the phrasing of the Liturgy Constitution: “. . . cum Musica efformet *necessariam liturgiae sollemnis partem* . . .” See Aymans, “Continuity and Development,” 237 n. 8. The Second Vatican Council did not itself present a definition of “solemn liturgy.”

³⁷¹ Virtually all of *TLS* had been penned in the 1893 *Votum*; the critical features highlighted here however did not “make it” into official pronouncements.

attendant.” This idea too is not novel, and lives again into SC (where music has evolved from “handmaid” to “minister”);³⁷² SC references “the Fathers of the Church and . . . the Roman pontiffs, who in recent times, led by St. Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial function supplied by sacred music in the service of the Lord.”³⁷³ In *TLS*, even though music may be “*pars integrans*,”

As a general principle it is a very grave abuse, and one to be altogether condemned, to make the liturgy of sacred functions appear a secondary matter, and, as it were, the servant of the music. On the contrary, the music is really *only a part of the liturgy* and its humble attendant.³⁷⁴

From this principle flow such stipulations (not new!) as

It is not lawful to make the priest at the altar wait longer than the ceremonies allow, for the sake of the singing or instrumental music.³⁷⁵

Following these items, *TLS* re-iterates much that was in the *Votum*. The “Three Qualities” and “Two Musics” are now published abroad for the whole Church. In spite of Leo’s belated attention to Gregorian chant, “which the Church regards as truly its own,” in spite of the near total neglect of chant in the Italian church of the century just passed, in *TLS* Gregorian takes on an unparalleled identity as *the* Music of the Church, the *highest model* after which all other music is to be measured. (The theatrical style is pointedly referred to

³⁷² Pius XI upgraded the expression to “*ancilla nobilissima*” in *Divini Cultus*, and Pius XII in *Musicæ sacrae disciplina* refers to church music as “*liturgiae quasi administra*.” [*administra* = assistant, handmaid]

³⁷³ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* VI.112. *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource* 3rd ed. (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, Archdiocese of Chicago, 1991) 30.

³⁷⁴ *TLS* VII.23. Italics added.

³⁷⁵ *TLS* VII.22.

as *least fitted* for church, “by nature the most unlike Gregorian chant.”)³⁷⁶ Three important points are made about the Gregorian: first, Pius asserts that “a service of the Church loses nothing of its solemnity when it is accompanied by no other music than Gregorian chant.” Secondly, it was the chant itself which was to enable the people’s participation:

Especially should this chant be restored to the use of the people, so that they may take a more active part in the offices, as they did in former times.³⁷⁷

Finally, though somewhat encoded, Pius makes it clear (in a time of limbo before the publication of Vatican chant books) whom he feels has the authentic Gregorian: the “proper chant of the Roman Church, the only chant which she has inherited from the ancient Fathers, which she has jealously kept for so many centuries in her liturgical books . . . [is that] which, lastly, has been so happily restored to its original perfection and purity by recent study.” (All of which is to say: *Solesmes*). It is, moreover, the beauty and purity of Solesmes chant that will in fact best *enable* popular participation:

Plainchant, when it is restored so satisfactorily to its original purity, as it was handed down by the Fathers and as it may be found in the ancient books of several Churches, is seen to be sweet, graceful, *very easy to learn* and possessed of a beauty so new and unexpected that wherever it is introduced it at once excites a real enthusiasm among the young singers.³⁷⁸

The *motu proprio* goes on to list various regulations, among them:

- No vernacular

³⁷⁶ TLS II.6.

³⁷⁷ TLS III.3.

³⁷⁸ Pius X to Cardinal Respighi. Hayburn, 234. Italics added.

- No alteration of text (singing is for *intelligibility* of the people)
- No chopping into concerted movements the *Gloria* and *Credo*
- No concerted Psalms at Vespers
- Organ versets *may* replace certain verses of Psalms, Canticles
- Modern music, within certain limits, is allowable
- Soloistic singing restricted
- Singers are, properly, a “choir of clerics.” They should be vested and not prominently seen.
- Women cannot function in choir.
- Instruments may only be used by permission of Diocesan bishop.
- Certain instruments are specifically prohibited: piano-forte, and “noisy or irreverent instruments, such as drums, kettledrums, cymbals, triangles and so on.”
- Bands: outside the building only; no secular music.

Finally, *TLS* closes with Pius’ characteristic concern for education: the “Chief Means of Procuring Good Sacred Music” are given through Diocesan Commissions, seminary study (of both Gregorian chant itself and “principles and laws of sacred music”), the re-establishment of “ancient choir schools,” the restoration and founding of new “higher schools of Church music” (for church musicians), and establishing smaller schools in the parishes (reflecting his personal experience) as “an easy means of gathering together both children and grown-up people to their profit and the edification of all the parish.”³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ *TLS* VIII.27-28.

2.6 Post – *Motu proprio*

In promulgating *Tra le sollecitudini*, Pius X showed early-on, as Falconi says, “the most unlooked-for aspect of the new pontificate, namely its rigidity.”³⁸⁰ Pius wanted no “misunderstanding” (for which musicians were justly infamous) about the meaning or the force of *TLS*, as he writes in the introduction:

Hence, in order that no one for the future may be able to plead in excuse that he did not clearly understand his duty and that all vagueness may be eliminated from the interpretation of matters which have already been commanded, We have deemed it expedient to point out briefly the principles regulating sacred music . . . We do therefore publish *motu proprio* and with certain knowledge, Our present instruction to which, as a *juridical code of sacred music (quasi a codice giuridice della musica sacra)*, We will with the fullness of Our Apostolic Authority that the force of law be given, and We do by Our present handwriting impose its scrupulous observance on all.³⁸¹

Cardinal Sarto had written at Venice in his Pastoral Letter that “I am well aware that the adversaries of the true ecclesiastical chant never fail to produce arguments for remaining in their deplorable obstinacy,” and as pope he did not want *TLS* to be a dead letter. Pius instructed Respighi, the vicar-general, on implementation: “And you, my Lord Cardinal, will allow no exception, brook no delay. By putting the matter off the difficulty would not become less, it would become greater: since the thing has to be done, let it be done at once and firmly.”³⁸² But in spite of his strongest intentions, *TLS* was not received without

³⁸⁰ Falconi, 31.

³⁸¹ Translation here from *Papal Documents on Sacred Music in Sacred Music*, 7-10. Reprint from *Sacred Music* (Journal of The Church Music Association of America). Wienandt, 162. Italics original.

³⁸² Pius X to Cardinal Respighi. Hayburn, 233.

controversy, provoking ‘strong reactions and opposition in Rome itself.’³⁸³ Confusion and speculation developed as to whether this was really the pope speaking, or perhaps the Roman Commission for Sacred Music. Eight years later, Cardinal Respighi was again issuing a “further clarification” which, while asserting that *TLS* was so clear that it “would not need further elucidation,” goes on with further rules to a telling length of some seven pages.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Falconi, 31.

³⁸⁴ Letter of Cardinal Pietro Respighi, February 2, 1912. Hayburn, 241–7.

CHAPTER 3

THE MOTU PROPRIO IN AMERICA

3.1 Section I: Context

3.1.1 The Roman Perspective

“*Perfect Storm*.” In even a brief accounting (as at the end of Chapter 2,) the stipulations of *Tra le sollecitudini* can be seen to exhibit quite a bit of detail, generated in large part by the desire for clarity, that there be “no excuse for misunderstanding.” Behind the surface detail of the regulations, however, larger principles, forces, or motivations are at work, and form the matrix out of which *TLS* emerged. Here we may suggest four such underlying forces:

3.1.1.1 *Distaste for overgrown, dominating music in liturgy.*

This is a very practical and perennial concern, born of simple, irritating experience: the well-known tendency of music to simply “take over” the liturgy, to disproportionately prolong the Mass for the music's sake itself, to become a showcase for individual “performers.” The complaint is an ancient and recurring one, evidenced in the history of worship from Biblical times; and there is no doubt that Giuseppe Sarto personally experienced it anew, as the nineteenth century inherited the exuberant Viennese tradition

while encountering the flowering of emotive masses in the Romantic idiom. Yet the age-old complaint leads in Pius X's formulations to the iteration of a fundamental principle: *the primacy of the liturgy*. Section 23 of TLS reads:

In general it must be condemned as a very grave abuse when in ecclesiastical functions the liturgy appears secondary and almost subservient to the music, *since music is simply a part of the liturgy and its humble handmaid*.¹

Indeed, the whole of the *motu proprio* is predicated on the idea that, for the Supreme Head of the Latin Church, “*before anything else it is necessary to see to the holiness and dignity of the temple*”; and further, “*we believe it our first duty to raise our voice at once in reproof and condemnation of whatever is found out of order in the functions of worship and ecclesiastical offices*.”²

Indeed, Pius asserts that it is liturgy that *sets the terms* for the role of music and the arts within worship generally (leading to his formulations of holiness, artistry, and universality.) Nevertheless, Pius is an ardent *supporter* of music in the liturgy, not given to considering its eradication as at Trent. Sacred music is affirmed as “*an integral part of the solemn liturgy*” (sec. 1), and it is linked in an organic way to nothing less than the “most eager wish that the true Christian spirit may flower again in every way . . .”³ But it was necessary for TLS to establish the primacy of the *liturgy* before it could make its case for the restoration of chant, and the participation by the faithful in that “musical” liturgy.

¹ Clement J. McNaspy, S.J., Mus.D., *The Motu Proprio of Church Music of Pope Pius X. A New Translation and Commentary* (Toledo, OH: Gregorian Institute of American, 1950) 13 (italics added). Unless otherwise stated, all translations of TLS in this chapter are taken from McNaspy.

² TLS, Introduction. McNaspy, 6. Italics added.

³ TLS, Introduction. See below, #IV, on the active participation of the faithful.

3.1.1.2 *Rejecting the “World”: Circling the Wagons*

For the many and complicated reasons discussed above,⁴ Pius X adopted a defensive posture toward the “world”; the world had rejected the Church (most vociferously from the French Revolution through all the nineteenth century political, scientific, and social upheavals), and thus the Church would have to turn inward and protect itself. The world, choosing its own way, could literally “go to hell.”

For the Church, this meant as never before the “purifying” of liturgy and music of all worldly influences and accretions, specifically expelling the “secular” in Sacred Music. Thus *TLS* features the prohibition of all “theatrical” music and instruments, the re-affirmation of Latin as the exclusive language of solemn Roman liturgy, and the exclusion of women from choirs. Above all, Gregorian Chant is to have pride of place as the most “un-worldly” of all human music.

3.1.1.3 *Centralizing and Unifying the Church*

Enduring the tumultuous course of the nineteenth century, the papacy responded with centralizing tendencies: reasserting the primacy of pontifical powers, and re-establishing an official theology in Thomism. As far back as the Council of Trent, Rome had also sought to establish an “authentic” music, its official Chant (along with other official liturgical offices, now book-printable as *editiones typicae*.)

The last two nineteenth century popes, Pius IX and Leo XIII, sought to unify the church's song by the establishment of just such an official chant book of the Church,

⁴ See Chapter 1, “Defender of the Faith,” pp. 12f.

published as the Ratisbon edition of the Roman *Graduale*.⁵ However, the culmination of decades-long research and praxis at Solesmes called into question the authenticity of Ratisbon, which led to bitter controversy, yet promised a version of chant that could make a scientific claim to being both early and virtually universal for the Western Church.

Here, Pius X found a timely support, one dear to his heart, for the project of Unification: the “authentic” Chant had finally been recovered and it would now be officially promulgated in Vatican editions. And in *TLS* it would be mandated for use.

3.1.1.4 *Pastoral Concern for the Faith of the People*

All of the above forces, or “impulses,” were not novel in the twentieth-century Church or new with Pius X, nor certainly was concern for an ardent faith in Catholic believers. What is new with Pius is the pronounced locus of the *source* of “the true Christian spirit” as within the liturgy itself: more specifically, a direct attribution of Christian spirit to “*active participation in the sacred mysteries*” as the “*first and indispensable source*.”

Moreover, this *actuosa participatio* is realized by *virtue of singing*, which is the proper role, the historic and recovered role, of the laity during solemn Mass. Thus, the *means* of active participation is singing, and in Pius' famous (if apocryphal) phrase, not singing *at* the Mass, but singing *the* Mass. This is categorically a major shift, a decisive return to early-Church practices over centuries of musical and liturgical passivity among the Catholic laity.

⁵ For an account from that time period of these papal efforts and their reception in the US, see “The Liturgical Chant,” *American Ecclesiastical Review* [AER] 2 (January 1890) 20-29.

And further, the *means* by which the faithful were to participate in the singing of the liturgy was none other than Gregorian Chant: that music which was in unison, did not need accompaniment, was (so it was claimed) easy to learn, and which rendered the texts *intelligibly*. The role of the people was to sing the Ordinary of the Mass (*Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei*), and it was these texts which Pius wished all to know and understand; by them they participated in the action of the Mass itself. A lively Christian spirit demanded participation; active participation was accomplished through singing; intelligible and liturgical participation required singing the texts of the Mass; and the accomplishment of all of the above pointed forcefully to the use of Gregorian chant.

Giuseppe Sarto lived at a time, before and after his pontificate, when chant was very much “in the air,” due to the earlier Caecilian movement and most especially to the work of Solesmes. He himself expressed on numerous occasions his personal love for Gregorian, its “sweet beauty.” But we can also see that the *motu proprio* emerged within a matrix of forces enumerated above, forces which fed each other and finally formed a sort of “perfect storm”: the desire to pare back an overgrown Romantic musical idiom in the liturgy; the desire to purify and insulate the Church of secular influences; the desire to centralize and unify through “official” means; and the ardent desire (so characteristic to Sarto) to enliven the faith of Catholic people by a more active involvement in the liturgy. It is difficult to know the relative strength of these four impulses within the mind and spirit of Pius X. What is clear is that together they reached a point of critical mass which found its solution in the appeal to Gregorian chant as *the* music of the Church. It was

preeminently Gregorian chant which fulfilled all these desires, and for which *Tra le sollecitudini* was finally constructed. The impact on the United States follows.

3.1.2 American Picture: Pre - 1903

“A colossal muddle”

In 1903 the United States was still a “missionary territory” of the Roman Church, under the jurisdiction of the *Propaganda Fide*.⁶ But despite its relative adolescence, the American church had already developed some established liturgical practices that would easily fall under Pius X's reform agenda (inheriting through immigration the “bad example” of its “older sister” Europe, as well as developing its own indigenous “secular” tastes.) Indeed the U.S. church had even generated reform impulses of its own in the nineteenth century, which paralleled and foreshadowed the *motu proprio* to a remarkable degree.⁷

As superior of the American colonies before 1776, and after the Revolution as the first American bishop, John Carroll was faced with developing “an institutional structure for a church that had never before existed in a democracy,” as Robert Grimes outlines.⁸ From its very beginning, one of the key motifs within the American Catholic church (to say nothing of the issue between Protestant and Catholic), was the question of where its loyalties lay in this new land which separated Church and State: would it be more

⁶ It was Pius X who changed that status in 1909.

⁷ See legislation of Second Baltimore Council, e.g. in Ann Louise Silverberg, *Cecilian Reform in Baltimore, 1868-1903*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1992. (Ann Arbor, UMI Dissertation Services, 2002) 132-136.

⁸ See Robert Raymond Grimes, “*How Shall We Sing in a Foreign Land?*” *Music of Catholic Immigrants in the Antebellum United States*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1992. (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1993) 17.

“Romanist” or more “Americanist”? Emblematic was Carroll's concern after the Revolution for the needs and rights of a “national church,” with an autonomous clergy (not “missionaries” subject to a Curial congregation) and with an ordinary national Bishop (not a Vicar Apostolic). Moreover, through the nineteenth century the American church struggled internally over issues of polity and power, even as it underwent prodigious institutional growth fed by sequential waves of European immigration. Here too, the American hierarchy struggled to keep Rome out of its “in-house” struggles, such as the controversy over “lay trustees” and the “widespread notion that Catholics could choose and dismiss pastors as they pleased.”⁹ James Hennessey sums up, “Personalities, finances, clerical ambition, and theories about lay power in the church all contributed to a colossal muddle.”¹⁰

3.1.2.1 *The Nineteenth Century*

This turbulence was to be reflected in the liturgical and musical life of the Church in nineteenth-century America, the history of which is very unevenly written.¹¹ For our purposes a few salient points can be made. The early part of the century was still very much a frontier situation in the U.S. (in 1800, New York City and Boston had but one Catholic church each; only Baltimore and Philadelphia had more than one “organized

⁹ James J. Hennessey, *American Catholics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 99.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹¹ Virtually the only short overviews are in Erwin Nemmers' *Twenty Centuries of Catholic Church Music* and Karl Gustav Fellerer's *History of Catholic Church Music*. A more detailed and scholarly treatment of the colonial and especially ante-bellum period is Robert Grimes, *How Shall We Sing in a Foreign Land*. A fine close study of the later nineteenth century is available in the Silverberg dissertation, *Cecilian Reform in Baltimore, 1868-1903*.

Catholic community.”¹²) and one in which Catholics were regarded largely as a “curiosity” (so Grimes), often with suspicion, and occasionally with outright hostility and violence.¹³

In this early situation Bishop Carroll had particular concerns that music in the vernacular was available: it would aid in the missionary effort among a largely illiterate people, and it would help establish Catholicism in the context of the new nation as truly *American*. The first hymnal with music printed for Anglo-American Catholics was in fact compiled by a Scottish immigrant who was likely an Anglican (suppressed English Catholics having virtually no repertory of their own), John Aitken's *A Compilation of the Litanies and Vespers Hymns and Anthems as They are Sung in the Catholic Church Adapted to the Voice or Organ* (1787). Running to three editions, Aitken's book is considered by Grimes the most important musical publication for American Catholics before 1830.¹⁴ Legislation from the first US National Synod in 1791 specifically included language that promoted the use of the vernacular in prayer and song.¹⁵ There was cultivated music in certain places from very early on (John Adams writing to his wife in 1774 that “the assembly chanted most sweetly and exquisitely,” and later in his diary that “the Scenery and Musick is so callculated [sic] to take in Mankind that I wonder the Reformation ever succeeded.”¹⁶), but also reports, such as from Bishop Fenwick of Boston in the 1830s, claiming that there was no singing at all in

¹² See Grimes, 84.

¹³ Rioting, and the burnings of convent and church buildings are detailed in Grimes, 92.

¹⁴ In these early American hymnals, plainsong melodies were straightjacketed with regular metered rhythms and subjected to heavy harmonization (chordal changes with almost every note of melody). See the example from the equally important Boston hymnal of 1840 of R. Garbett, Appendix B.

¹⁵ Decrees 17 & 18 from “Rulings of the First National Synod of the US at Baltimore,” presided over by Bishop Carroll. Silverberg, 132.

¹⁶ Grimes, 15-16.

two-thirds of American Catholic congregations, who “know as much about music of any kind as they do about Greek.”¹⁷ To those living in the post-Vatican II era, the concern in early America that people take part in singing in church seems surprisingly unexpected.

Note this excerpt from the Preface of the *Roman Vespéral* published in Baltimore in 1857:

To the laity it will be a *vade-mecum*, by which they may assist at the services of the Church, and take part in the same. We say “take part in the same;” and why? Because such is really the Catholic custom: we do not go to the public service of the Church merely to follow the dictates of our private devotions, but to pray with the Church and say the prayers which she prescribes for us. The Chants of the Church should be familiar to all. It will take time, in our new country, to effect this. Yet, if this work is introduced into our parochial schools, academies, colleges, &c., a few years will effect a great change; and, in place of hearing *extracts* . . . sung by the choir alone, our voices will unite . . . in those Liturgical chants which have always formed the grand public worship of the church militant.¹⁸

As successive waves of immigrants arrived, predominantly French and Germans at first, after the 1840s the Irish, much of the European practice of church music came with them. For German immigrants, it was a conscious transplanting of their cultural heritage, currently undergoing the *Kulturkampf* back home, but now finding a safe shrine in their national parishes in America. The Irish, victims of heavy legal persecution back home, were inheritors of very little in the way of church music: *silence* was their inheritance. But they were not lost to music once in the US, utilizing and developing a keen love for traditional ethnic musical idioms, as well as adopting the concertizing ways of fellow Catholics in urban parishes (preferring Italian music to German.) As the Irish had

¹⁷ Quoted in Nemmers, 169.

¹⁸ (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1857.) See also, e.g., 1805 letter of Michael Egan, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia, to Bishop Carroll: Grimes, 56.

territorial but not national parishes, there was more cultural “porosity” which probably helped secular idioms find a way in, and which lived on as the church grew:

It was easy for the secular standards that were customary in singing to be brought into the little church; and later to continue the same by dint of habit in the new and more pretentious sanctuary. With the habit came the dulling of the sense of propriety.¹⁹

J. Alfred Schehl states that “music in our Catholic Churches began to take on a certain order about 1850”:

At that time and in the years following, the Masses of Haydn, Mozart, Gounod, Farmer and others were the choice for special occasions, while Masses by composers of lesser merit were the fare for ordinary Sundays. The Motets were sometimes operatic and as well as other secular selections to which the texts of the liturgy were adapted.²⁰

The use of European concerted music in church served in some measure to give a sense of social elevation and pride for immigrants, as well to provide literally a “concert hall” for those who otherwise had no means or opportunity to hear “great music”²¹; it quickly became an established feature of US Catholic worship in the larger urban centers.

Archbishop John Glennon of St. Louis would later quip, “On big occasions, the choir was buoyed up and sustained by a great orchestra. Everybody came to the Mass – Turks, Jews, Protestants, and even some Catholics, and all went away from the performance delighted.”²² The masses of Mozart and Haydn, et al., when well performed, could serve

¹⁹ N.a., “The Recent American Congress for the Reform of Church Music,” *AER* 63 (August 1920) 117.

²⁰ J. Alfred Schehl, A.A.G.O., “Reminiscences of Fifty Years,” *CEC* 81 no. 1 (Nov.-Dec. 1953) 36.

²¹ Silverberg, 445-447.

²² Address of Most Rev. John J. Glennon, Archbishop of St. Louis, to St. Louis Catholic Organists’ Guild. Reprinted from “St. Louis Cathedral Bulletin” in *CAT* 22 no. 1 (March 1936) 13-15.

as a source of piety, patrimony, pride, or pleasure (or indeed all of the above) for immigrant Catholic Americans. As the situation evolved, however, it seems that sub-par, poorly performed repertoire was more often the case at Sunday mass, and just as often a source of pain.²³ The congregants, in pleasure or pain, were in both cases passive listeners.

3.1.2.2 *Garden of the Soul*

Because the impact of immigration gave such swift growth and ferment to the US Catholic church, the situation generally evolved from one of a relative prior freedom, to greater concerns and controls from the hierarchy. The second important US music legislation, from 1837, showed concern over “the abuses in church singing that have been growing in this part of the world. . . . [S]ongs in a popular style are not allowed to be performed during the celebration of Masses or solemn vespers.”²⁴ As the century moved on, moreover, the Caecilian reform movement begun in Europe made its presence felt in the US; Bishop Henni in Milwaukee received Professors John Singenberger and Max Spiegler from Franz Witt at Regensburg in 1873, established with them the American

²³ “The rarest exception in our churches is to hear *good music* (appropriate or not, *transeat*) well sung. The rule is to hear good music poorly sung, or a sad congeries of mild musical inanities of greatest length and ground out very, very slowly.” H.T. Henry, “Quomodo Cantabimus?,” *AER* 7 (August 1892) 120-133, here 127. Italics original. Another voice fills out the later nineteenth-century American scene: “Thirty or more years ago we of the United States were but beginners in musical matters, the standard of taste and judgment had not been created or developed, and in the choice and presentation of Catholic church music especially we contented ourselves with an imitation and poor rendition of what was intended for circumstances wholly different from our own, or with productions inferior in themselves. . . . The condition of things, ruled as it often was by some incompetent autocrat in the choir-gallery, can only be summed up by that much-abused word ‘dreadful’ – a dreadfulness which ranged from the ludicrous to torture. . . .” From article in *Catholic World* (May, 1900), cited in Rev. Peter Moran, CSP, “Quod Ore Canto,” *Liturgical Arts* 8 (1939-40) 46-48, here 48.

²⁴ Silverberg, 165.

Society of St. Cecilia in Milwaukee that same year, and through the Catholic Normal School of the Holy Family at St. Francis, Wisconsin gave formation to two generations of Catholic church musicians.²⁵ Caecilian ideals and influence reached their apogee in the US around the time of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884), and were reflected in both Church legislation and practice. Both the Second and Third Baltimore councils had stated:

We admonish all pastors to be vigilant in eliminating whatever abuses of music may have crept into their churches. We strictly command them never to tolerate the temple of God to resound with profane melodies. They must permit in the church only music that is grave, pious and truly ecclesiastical.²⁶

But still alongside the concern for propriety was the emphasis on the participatory singing of the faithful: as early as 1866 the Second Baltimore Council had urged that “the elements of Gregorian chant be taught and exercised in the parochial schools,” in order that, as the Third Council added,

the number of those able to sing the psalms well may constantly grow larger, until gradually at least the majority of the faithful may, according to the custom of the ancient Church, still observed in some places, learn to chant Vespers and other services in union with the ministers and the choir.²⁷

²⁵ See summary at Nemmers, 173-6.

²⁶ Rt. Rev. Edmund M. Dunne (Bishop of Peoria), “Church Music,” *AER* 71 (November 1924) 461-7, here 463-4.

²⁷ Quoted in Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, “Lay Participation in the Liturgy of the Church,” in *A Symposium on the Life and Work of Pope Pius X*, prepared under direction of the Episcopal Committee of The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (Washington, D.C.: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1946) 137-158, here 146. Diekmann also points to the unique effort of the American bishops in publishing an official prayerbook, p. 147.

Godfrey Diekmann ascribes to the entire American episcopate, during this era (the mid-to-late 1800s), a leadership on music issues that was unparalleled elsewhere.²⁸ But as Diekmann points out, the Baltimore legislation on popularizing the chant was not obeyed, and the efforts of most reformers were “in the main, rewarded by indifference and even hostility.”²⁹

The vision of the hierarchy was evidently not shared by the majority of their priests, and so the laity continued to prefer their own *Garden of the Soul* to the “garden of delight, the spiritual treasures, the flowers and sprouts of the sacred Liturgy.”³⁰

From that time until the turn of the century, Silverberg shows that musical ideals suffered a relapse, as the church often returned to practices against which Caecilianism and Baltimore had struggled: “the tradition of orchestral masses left musicians, clergy, and laity with a fondness for the old familiar repertory that was difficult to eradicate.”³¹ The American situation would remain a fair target for the reforms issued by Pius X from his international pulpit.

²⁸ Ibid., 145.

²⁹ Nicola A. Montani, “What is Being Done toward Promoting the Cause of Liturgical Music in this Country,” *CAT* 2 no. 1 (Jan 1916) 10.

³⁰ Diekmann, “Lay Participation,” 147.

³¹ Silverberg, 424.

3.1.2.3 The Later Nineteenth Century: “Autocracy of the Choir-loft”

*Now in most of our concerted Masses, who elicits more attention, the celebrant at the altar, or the soloist in the choir?*³²

During the late nineteenth century, the relapse described above by Silverberg is chronicled in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, through a substantial number of articles from which the Catholic musical landscape in America can be fairly reconstructed. An *AER* article from 1903, for example, claimed to sketch the “actual situation obtaining in America at the time of the *motu proprio*”:

Think of it, that in an *Encyclopedia Britannica* article (Palestrina, p. 179), a Protestant can naïvely, but alas, truthfully, write of our Catholic churches: “The music sung does not form an essential part of the service. In reciting the prescribed form of words with the prescribed ceremonies, the officiating priest fulfils unaided all the necessary conditions of the service while the congregation looks on, and worships, and the choir endeavors to excite its emotion by singing appropriate music.” And that is Catholic Mass worship – at its best, too . . .³³

Bemoaning current conditions in Catholic worship music, most often these journal articles are in the way of protest, and suggest reforms of various kinds.³⁴ The tyranny of choirs at Mass is denounced, as the people in the congregation below were condemned to silence, and the presiding priest to waits of untold length:

³² Dunne, “Church Music,” 464.

³³ W.F.P. Stockley, “The Pope and the Reform in Church Music” (Part I), *AER* 30 (March 1904) 279-292, here 291-2.

³⁴ A good representative of this genre is an 1898 entry by one John Hyde of Chicago, Illinois, who compares current practices with the recent decrees of Leo XIII and the Congregation of Sacred Rites, especially *De musica sacra* and *Quod Sanctus Augustinus*, both of 1894. “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” *AER* 19 (October 1898), 337-353.

For the people in the pews it may be a pleasant waiting – it is a good concert for a small fee – and for the people in the organ-loft it is very glorious. . . But the aged or feeble [fasting celebrant at the altar] is forced to wait, and fast, and suffer. He dare not go on with the sacred ceremony until the choir permits him. He is wholly at the choir's mercy . . . ³⁵

The quality of choral music was regularly censured as disobedient of curial injunctions that “a piece of music, in order to be proper for performance in church, must receive its inspiration from the sacred ceremony, and be in keeping with the sense of the rite and the words of the liturgy.”³⁶ “What plainer instruction for the Catholic chorister, choirmaster, and organist?” asks Hyde, and yet

what a vast amount of musical trash – we cannot call it sacred music – will be laid aside or burned [if the rules were heeded.] In the heaps will appear names that are now fairly worshipped in the organ-lofts – names such as Von Weber, Generali, Mercadente, Zingarelli, Giorza, Concone, besides many others of lesser note, such as Millard, Farmer, Rossi, Dumonti, Weihl, etc., etc. Beautiful music, it is true, has been produced by the men who are represented by these names, but not one work of theirs, that I can recall, which is inspired by the sacred ceremonies of our Church, or in keeping with the meaning of the rite and the words of the liturgy. Instead of quickening the devotion of the faithful, this sort of music awakens memories of the opera-house, of the concert-hall, and some of it, even of the ball-room.³⁷

Descriptions of “profane music” are ubiquitous and colorful, Hyde again providing a good example:

Alas ! many of the compositions now used in our choirs . . . are full of theatrical motives (motifs), variations, and reminiscences, and, even without these, are *profane* in well-nigh every characteristic. . . . One may occasionally hear in Catholic churches a certain trio from Verdi's

³⁵ Hyde, “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” 347.

³⁶ Ibid., 340-1.

³⁷ Ibid., 341.

opera *Attila*, a duet from his *Trovatore*, a bass solo from Mozart's *Zauberflöte* . . . I recently heard Kücken's well-known love song, *Good-Night, Farewell, My Own True Heart*, sung to the words of the hymn to the Blessed Sacrament, *O Salutaris Hostia!* A composition which is in great vogue in small choirs, as music for the *Tantum ergo*, . . . might commonly have been heard many years ago, as a popular love-and-wine song in the beer-gardens of Prussia and eastern Holland.³⁸

To make matters worse, advertisements of liturgical “programmes” and soloists are common practice, adding to the concert-nature of services and the “performer” status of choir members.³⁹ Another transgression commonly noted is the mutilation of liturgical texts, Hyde openly suspecting some compositions to have been written by “a Jew or a Unitarian.”⁴⁰ Stockley reports of a Jesuit Father who claimed to have heard in one Credo setting: “*genitum non factum, factum non genitum.*”⁴¹ Weddings and funerals (perennially!) are an especial source of scandal as far as non-liturgical, secular and vernacular music.⁴²

³⁸ Ibid., 343-4.

³⁹ These were regularly run in CAT. See in the early issues, e.g., CAT 1 no. 1 (Feb 1915) 26-29; CAT 1 no. 2 (June 1915) 26-29; CAT 1 no. 3 (Oct 1915), 23-27; CAT 2 no. 1 (Jan 1916) 23-27; CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 20-23; CAT 2 no. 3 (July 1916) 19-22; and later CAT 20 (1934) 102-5. Also W.F.P. Stockley, "The Pope and the Reform in Church Music" (Part I) cites numerous programmes flouting papal regulation, 283 n.2.

⁴⁰ Hyde, "Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation," 346-7.

⁴¹ Stockley, “The Mind of Rome in Church Music,” AER 26 (April 1902) 425-437, here 432. Hyde provides a humorous if darkly instructive example of a random *Credo* libretto, in “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” 345-6. The conclusion alone reads: “Et vitam venturi saeculi venturi saeculi venturi saeculi amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen. Et vitam venturi seculi et vitam venturi seculi amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen vitam venturi seculi vitam venturi seculi amen amen amen amen amen amen et vitam venturi venturi seculi venturi seculi amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen amen. Credo Credo Credo Credo Credo.” He notes the alarm of the priest “when he hears the *Credo* shouted at the close, fearing that they are going to sing it all over again!” “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” 347.

⁴² Even very recently I served as organist for the funeral of a prominent Chicago monsignor, who had requested “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” in place of the *In Paradisum* at the end of mass. Francis Cardinal George, the Chicago Archbishop known otherwise to have a stern eye for liturgical propriety, acceded to this request, reluctantly but with benign resignation.

Why did such music flourish in the Church? Hyde places the blame partly on “young people” and the generally amateur make-up of American choirs:

Sometimes, too, the organist brings it in, to please a favorite singer who desires to sing it and thus create an impression among the pew-holders. The bulk of our choirs are of the volunteer kind. As the singers who do not work from supernatural motives, or who are not paid for their services, may leave the choir at any time, the organist naturally hesitates to incur their displeasure by refusing to permit them to sing their chosen pieces . . . the poor man is threatened with a weekly rebellion. He capitulates by permitting each member of his choir, in turn, to sing *solos* or parts in *duets* or *trios*, and to select whatever pieces they please.⁴³

Sometimes the clergy too were to blame for “attempting to import into the Church of God the music of the theatre, under the plea that what is pleasing in the theatre cannot be displeasing in the church.”⁴⁴ Further fault for these abuses is due to lack of controls over music publishing:

No Catholic publisher is allowed to issue a book relating to our religion or our liturgy without previously submitting it to ecclesiastical authority for examination and approval; and yet a book in which the most sacred parts of our liturgy are mutilated or jumbled into a hodge-podge by some money-seeking musician, perhaps a Protestant, an infidel, and issued, perhaps by a publisher who never crossed the threshold of a Catholic church, is not only permitted to have freedom of circulation among our people, but is elevated to a place of distinction in our churches by . . . our choirs!⁴⁵

Publishers too come under fire for various hymn-books, appealing for profit to “well-meaning young men and women, whose home music is trash”; a collection such as the Christian Brothers' *Catholic Youth's Hymn Book*, “so widely used in the United States and in

⁴³ Hyde, “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” 344.

⁴⁴ Stockley, “The Mind of Rome in Church Music,” 431.

⁴⁵ Hyde, “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” 346-7.

Canada, and so discreditable to scholarship in letters and in music” is further denounced as “unsatisfactory to every instinct – artistic, liturgical, historical, soundly religious . . .”⁴⁶

The Bishop of Burlington, VT, writing from five decades of ordained experience, expresses the considered notion that

I, for one, think that the composers and leaders of choirs are frequently very much mistaken in imagining that their artistic efforts are to the taste of our congregations. The writer has been fifty-two years a priest, and most of this time in rural and poor parishes. His experience is that Catholics go to Mass for the sake of the Mass, and that long, unintelligible music keeps them from the church.⁴⁷

Henry too notes the “notorious fact” of lay avoidance of the High Mass: “The reason they gave was, *that the music prevented them from praying*.”⁴⁸ High masses of course took longer too, and people simply liked the twenty-five to thirty-minute length of low masses. The high-mass avoidance phenomenon, as we shall see, lived on strongly into the twentieth century.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Quotes here from Stockley, “The Pope and the Reform in Church Music” (Part II), *AER* 30 (April 1904) 383-401, here 398. Reference is to The Christian Brothers, *The Catholic Youth's Hymn Book: containing the Hymns of the Seasons and Festivals of the Year, and an Extensive Collection of Sacred Melodies; to which are added an Easy Mass, Vespers, and Motets for Benediction*. Revised and enlarged edition. (New York: P. O'Shea, 1885).

⁴⁷ Louis [J. Joseph De Goesbriand], Bishop of Burlington [Vermont], “What Shall We Sing?,” *AER* 8 (February 1893) 117-123, here 121.

⁴⁸ Henry, “Quomodo Cantabimus?” 127, quoting Bishop Lootens in the *Extracts from the Roman Gradual* (see below n. 135).

⁴⁹ See below, pp. 215-16.

3.1.2.4 *Gregorian Chant*

“In my long experience I have heard many objections urged against the Gregorian chant,” stated the Bishop of Burlington.⁵⁰ Hyde among others agrees that both choirs and people in late nineteenth-century America seem to have a distaste for Gregorian chant:

They say this is all new to them. They ask, how are they to know the [Propers]? And some of them add that, anyhow, those [Propers] are set only in the Gregorian Chant, which is a strange language to them – and even if they could sing the chant they would not do it, as the people in the pews do not like it! . . . The people in the choir sing for the people in the pews, and this is why they cannot, and would not, anyway, sing the Gregorian music.

. . . [This] is not a mere fancy of mine, but an actual fact. Gregorian Chant is going out of our choirs, and very fast. And why? Because the young singers of our choirs, who cannot sing it because they do not know it, are permitted to banish it.⁵¹

Another writer in 1901 confirms this picture: “One often hear expressions of regret from the clergy that they never hear the Proper of the Mass from one year's end to another, because their choirs cannot or will not make a proper study of the plain chant.”⁵²

Archbishop Glennon again recalled, “Such composers as Gounod, Haydn, Cherubini and Giorza – reigned supreme. The music of the Mass was something wonderful and wonderfully rendered”:

If one should have said at that time, “How would it be to have some Gregorian music?”, the answer would have been, “Why that is all right, I suppose, for those who do not know any better – for monks and nuns that sing in choir, but for us people of intelligence – Catholics –

⁵⁰ Bishop of Burlington, “What Shall We Sing?,” 123.

⁵¹ Hyde, “Our Church Music in the Light of Ecclesiastical Legislation,” 349-350.

⁵² Stockley, “Mind of Rome,” 435.

why, we must please the people and we have to resort to these grand illustrations of music.”⁵³

Moreover, Vespers is commonly noted to have suffered a serious decline; one author noting the “flippant and trifling musical substitute for Vespers and for the forgotten art of chanting the Psalms according to the seasons and festivals of the year, that have caused that beautiful service to sink into oblivion.”⁵⁴

A common reason given for the non-reception of chant, its distinct unpopularity both during this period and following the *motu proprio*, is the “vitiating” taste of the general public: “The stream [of chant tradition] has long been choked,” says Stockley, and quotes an English priest to the effect that “the taste of our Catholics in general for Church music is too vitiated, or perhaps rather totally corrupted by opera music and fiddling jigs, ever to relish serious tones.”⁵⁵ Another oft-cited reason for the unpopularity of chant recalls its poor performance in churches: “Why,” asks Stockley, “is Gregorian chant often so horribly sung, higgledy-piggledy, with no rhythm, even free, and with such braying noise, and such barbarous accompaniments?”⁵⁶ Elsewhere he notes that these “Mass brayings”

⁵³ Address to St. Louis Catholic Organists’ Guild, 13.

⁵⁴ Stockley, “The Pope and the Reform in Church Music” (Part II), 396. Stockley further notes the irony of the concurrent increase in Anglican attention to chant and historic worship (quoting a colleague): “It is a sad reflection that many of our Anglican High Church brethren are familiar with the psalms and the old Latin hymns, and the marvellous [sic] melodies the Church has set to them; and that to many of us they are entirely strange.” (Ibid., 396). Again quoting another contemporary source, (the *Pilot* of London), he notes parallels in music reform movements among Anglicans: “Plain song (Gregorian) is, after all, the obvious and perfect satisfactory musical vehicle for our [Anglican] forms of worship.” (Ibid., 393, n.7). An article from 1900 notes the formation in America of a branch of the English Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, whose “objects . . . in their nature, appeal as strongly to Catholics as to the Anglican churchmen who largely compose its membership.” *AER* 23 (August 1900) 155-161, here 155.

⁵⁵ “The Pope and the Reform” (Part II), 390.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 395. On the accompaniments, see e.g. Aitken’s hymnal! (p. 175, n. 14 above).

turn off the congregation: they “are apt to disgust the hearer, and make a penance of what the Church means to be a most holy pleasure.”⁵⁷ Yet the authority issue is raised: “Whether we like it or dislike it, we cannot get away from the fact that [Gregorian Chant] is the Church's authorized song . . .”⁵⁸

3.1.2.5 *Congregational Participation*

AER shows evidence that concern for the active musical participation of the laity was a surprisingly live issue *prior* to the landmark appeal of *Tra le sollecitudini*. We have noted above the stated (though never seemingly implemented) inclusion of congregational singing on the Caecilian agendas, both European and American. An early (1883) *AER* article suggests “the marked favor into which Congregational Singing is growing . . .”⁵⁹ The backdrop was a developing awareness of the long drought of lay liturgical involvement, one source pointedly noting that since Trent “I am not aware of any ecclesiastical Rubric [sic] directing the behaviour of the people.”⁶⁰

H.T. Henry wrote a sequence of two lengthy articles in *AER* in 1892, presenting the “status of the argument for Congregational Singing.”⁶¹ Therein he paints a picture of the predominant *silence* in “our churches [which is] not only ‘audible’ but oppressive”:

⁵⁷ “The Mind of Rome,” 427.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 435.

⁵⁹ N.a., “Congregational Singing,” *AER* 2 (June 1890) 463-467, here 463.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁶¹ “Cantate Domino,” *AER* 7 (July 1892) 19-29; and “Quomodo cantabimus?,” *AER* 7 (August 1892) 120-133.

[I]f the religious feelings of our hearts seek vent as naturally in song as our thoughts do in speech, *surely some violence has been done to our higher nature in these days, when the silence of the worshipper is the rule*, and the religious song of the people a *patent and rare exception*.⁶²

The general American attitude seems to be, “the people can't sing, don't like to sing, can't be made to sing, and much prefer to have hired singers do the work for them.”⁶³ Henry challenges this current assessment: “If our people should indeed prove listless, this cannot be charged to natural apathy, but to the languor of a diseased tradition which has made a separate caste of singers, and the rest of the 'holy nation' pariahs.”⁶⁴ On a theological level he asserts that

No proof is necessary of the patent truth that “church music,” to fulfill at once the office of natural exponent of devotion for the people who come together to worship God . . . should be a song of the whole people, and not of half-a-dozen paid *employés* [sic] . . .⁶⁵

He makes the case that choir singing can only be vicarious worship for the people, artistic perhaps but not devotional for the listener: “The thing can be done, but it cannot be done for long, it cannot be done constantly. We are always tempted to shrink from worshippers into critics.”⁶⁶ Henry's comments are remarkably prescient of the liturgical movement:

Does the artistic super-refinement of modern harmony give music to the people? In one sense, yes; and, as our church concerts are, like any concert, on the co-operative plan, rather cheaply for each individual auditor. But in another sense, has it not taken music away from our people? And that, too, at a very dear cost – the cost of enthusiastic

⁶² Henry, “Cantate Domino,” 20. Italics added.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Henry, “Quomodo cantibimus?” 124.

⁶⁵ Henry, “Cantate Domino,” 26.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 26-27, quoting a “Mr. Curwen” in *Studies in Worship Music*, vol.1, p. 331.

piety; of the sympathy in the service of God which makes of many, one; of the very unity and completeness of the liturgy itself . . .⁶⁷

Henry especially agonizes over the lay silence in Catholic churches, when Protestantism has turned congregational song to such popular advantage:

[W]e must surely recognize the powerful instrumentality of a united congregational enthusiasm of song in perpetuating [in Protestantism] what should long since have died a quiet death of general debility.⁶⁸ Alas! we are living face to face with the sad object-lesson of what great use it serves in the cause of error, and of how the little recognition we accord it has resulted in the small attendance at the great public offices of the Church which require song as an essential part.⁶⁹

The experience that elaborate choir Masses actually served as a deterrent to lay attendance in the US,⁷⁰ undoubtedly helped turn attention to Gregorian chant as a means of facilitating congregational participation, *prior* to TLS. The decree of the Third Council of Baltimore is often invoked, to the effect that “it was most desirable that the rudiments of Gregorian chant should be taught in the primary school so that *by degrees the greater part of the people could take part in the choral services of the Church.*”⁷¹

Because of the need for reform – of out-of-control choirs; of mutilated texts; of operatic, secular and trite ethnic music; of a silenced and listless laity – attention gradually coalesced around Gregorian chant.⁷² For the whole program of reform, asserts Stockley,

⁶⁷ Ibid., 26. Italics added.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁹ Henry, “Cantate Domino,” 27-28.

⁷⁰ See above, pp. 183-4.

⁷¹ Quoted in Stockley, “The Mind of Rome,” 427. Italics added.

⁷² “Give the writer any unison singing by an untrained mob rather than ‘the feebleness and mild inanities of Webbe, Ett. Concone, Bordese, *et hoc genus omne.*” Henry, “Quomodo cantabimus?” 128.

“The basis of our work must be the Plain Chant. Let no one decide about it without knowing what it may really be like, and without facing the fact of the position the Church gives it.”⁷³

3.1.2.6 *Practical Steps*

The calling of attention to abuses in liturgical music, and of the need to involve congregations actively in singing, led to a number of suggested programs of practical steps of reform, which themselves help paint the picture of liturgical music in the late 1800s. A frequent feature of the reform programs is the emphasis on the *simplicity* and *achievability* of beginning and carrying through these reforms, over the entrenched state of “depravity and disobedience.”

As an example, Stockley addresses the quality of music in general:

When we keep to the abuses, then, to operas, drawing-room songs, and national melodies, we are really opposing Rome. But we can obey her . . . This is really a simple matter to begin with than many seem to imagine. Here . . . there is no room for discussion at all. Every Catholic church choir could obey its priest tomorrow if he were to enforce these simple Roman rules.⁷⁴

He then goes on to list seven “immediately enforceable” rules:

1. No drawing-room airs
2. No national airs
3. No operas
4. No repetition by choirs of Gloria in excelsis deo or Credo in unum Deum.

⁷³ Ibid., 436.

⁷⁴ Stockley, “The Mind of Rome,” 432.

5. No changing “of the slightest word in the sacred text”
6. No leaving out the Proper of the Mass (at least can be done in monotone)
7. No suppression of the Proper Psalms, Hymns, and Antiphons at Vespers

As for congregational singing, particularly with the use of plainsong, Henry suggests a plan of action. But first he acknowledges the difficulties, in an insightful if (appropriately)

lengthy assessment of the complexity of the enterprise:

For the objection is immediately made that both the plain chant of our Liturgical offices and the strangeness of the Latin idiom and pronunciation offer *insuperable barriers* . . . Again it is objected that well-meant efforts to bring about even a common vernacular song must be baffled by the *listlessness of the people*; by the *adverse criticism of those who have interests at stake*, and of those whose “cultured” musical appreciation will not tolerate the *rude surges of popular song*; by the want, it may be, of a large and powerful *organ “to lead the singing,”* by the difficulty in securing *competent teachers*; by the added expense of a large supply of *music books* for the purpose; by the absence, amongst the largest proportion of the common people, of ears delicate enough to appreciate and apprehend musical intervals clearly, or of voices flexible enough and smooth enough to give pleasing utterance to musical sounds.⁷⁵

Henry then gives suggestions for getting the congregation singing in graduated steps:⁷⁶

1. Singing (by the whole congregation) of “those old-time melodies which everybody may fairly be assumed to know – e.g., the *Adeste Fideles*, the *Stabat Mater*, the *O Salutaris*, all of them in an English version.”
2. The use of English hymns at the early Masses, and at various devotions.
3. The Latin Responses at High Mass and Vespers.
4. A simple unison “Mass in modern tonality”; could be sung antiphonally.

⁷⁵ H. T. Henry, “Quomodo Cantabimus?,” 122. Italics added.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 122-3.

5. A select choir to sing the Graduale chants, preferably in Gregorian, or to a psalm tone, or “a simple modern melody.”
6. Envisions the “highest grade” which includes all the liturgical chants in Gregorian, and “a large repertoire of English hymns for different devotions.”⁷⁷

In addition to these “suggested” programs of reform, episcopal oversight in some dioceses followed the national lead of Baltimore by issuing *mandated* musical reforms. In the 1880s, the Bishop of Burlington published *Rules and Recommendations regarding Church music, in the diocese of Burlington, Vt.* Herein one sees the usual proscriptions of “objectionable and unauthorized” music; but further, and more specifically, “Masses not expressly approved by a Bishop or not contained in a properly authorized manual of Church music *I have absolutely prohibited.*”⁷⁸ The right of approval of music *before being introduced into the divine service* is reserved “in the first instance, [for] the Bishop,”

who may appoint a committee, properly qualified, to examine whether the style of composition is suitable for the solemn functions of the Church and whether the correctness of Catholic doctrine has not been marred by the freedom of the musician.⁷⁹

He goes on to urge the singing of the plainsong Propers “in all well organized churches” by “regular chanters,” who likewise should lead the active singing of the Ordinary by the Congregation. (Opposing the autocracy of choirs, and anticipating in a remarkable way themes of the twentieth century, he notes: “Every Christian is a member of Jesus Christ,

⁷⁷ Two Catholic hymnals from the 1880s are cited by Henry as having “a plentiful supply of material for the best congregational singing.” These are *The Roman Hymnal* by Rev. J. B. Young, SJ (New York: Pustet and Co., 1884) and *The Catholic Hymnal* by Rev. Alfred Young, CSP (New York: Catholic Publishing Society, 1888, which “should be procured by all who are interested in this subject.” “Quomodo Cantabimus?,” 133.

⁷⁸ Bishop of Burlington, “What Shall We Sing?,” 117. Italics added.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 118.

as intimately united to Him as the branch is to the vine. By baptism, our bodies became the members of Christ, and our souls the living abode of His Holy Spirit.”⁸⁰) Following the current statements coming from Rome, and for the sake of unity (opposing an apparent plurality of chant editions even in Vermont), he authorizes the Pustet chant books, “*to be the only music now accepted and approved by the Holy See, as the recognized chant.*”⁸¹

3.1.2.7 Conclusion

The turn of the twentieth century held both poignancy and promise in American Catholic church music. Stockley⁸² cites three different authors who reflected on the era:

The time is opportune at the beginning of the new century for the publication in the United States of missals and vesper books for the laity. *It is a remarkable fact that in our religious schools, colleges, and kindred places of education the treasures of liturgy are almost unknown.*⁸³

The sorrow and the mortification is that so few Catholics take the trouble to understand this liturgy or to enter into its spirit. For most people, it is enough that the ceremonies of the Church go on, and that they attend upon those of obligation; but as to any curiosity concerning the meaning of these ceremonies, it seems hardly to exist.⁸⁴

Perhaps the saddest to all sights in this melancholy world is the mishandling, worse than neglect, of our Catholic treasures, our ceremonies, music, architecture, our philosophies and our devotions by those who should watch over them as at the gate of Heaven.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 122.

⁸¹ Bishop of Burlington, “What Shall We Sing?,” 120. Italics original.

⁸² “The Mind of Rome,” 436-7. All italics original.

⁸³ Stockley (ibid.) cites *New York Freeman’s Journal*, no author or date.

⁸⁴ Ibid., referenced only as “another voice from amongst us.”

Reformation is always called for, now as in more scandalous times, and in no slight degree.⁸⁵

That enormous Reformation, *Tra le sollecitudini*, was just around the corner.

3.2 Section II: The Twentieth Century

3.2.1 Into the Age of Mediocrity?

The picture of *Tra le sollecitudini* and its influence in its first half-century in America is a complex one. The *motu proprio* itself engaged more than a few distinct (but ever interrelated) areas of concern: the quality of music *qua music*, Gregorian chant, the primacy of the liturgy, the place of choirs, the need for congregational participation, seminary education, episcopal oversight (through commissions), obedience to papal authority, and so forth. Each of these areas in turn resonated (or not!) with particular “audiences” in the American church: the clergy, the musicians, “the people,” the educators, and the (emerging group of) liturgists primary among them. Thus, the story of *TLS* necessarily entails awareness of the complexity of the picture, one wherein even small details can yield significant meaning: much of the tale can be sensed, for example, in the eyewitness report of a Sister whose dedicated efforts are thwarted by her Pastor.⁸⁶

In what follows then we will search the meaning in some of this detail, but a work of this length must necessarily limit itself to a certain level of generality, difficult and

⁸⁵ Dr. William Barry, “The Prospects of Catholicism,” *National Review* (1901) cited.

⁸⁶ See below, pp. 237.

dangerous as that is; to begin, we will attempt to establish an overall view of *TLS* in America in this half-century.

3.2.1.1 Overview: 1915/1928/1953

On November 7, 1953, Samuel Cardinal Stritch of Chicago called together all the boys' and men's choirs of the largest archdiocese in the United States for a Solemn Pontifical Mass at Holy Name Cathedral, marking the fiftieth anniversary of *Tra le sollecitudini*. In the great celebration, the Chicago choirs were joined by the *Pueri Cantores* of Paris, France, in offering a liturgically impeccable program of music.⁸⁷ Across the nation the anniversary was similarly celebrated in a variety of events. Archbishop John Gregory Murray of St. Paul, Minnesota, directed each parish in his archdiocese to carry out a five-point program on November 22 itself, including a Solemn or sung Mass using approved music, lecture-demonstrations of liturgical music, and testimonial dinners for parish musicians. Archbishop Edward F. Hoban of Cleveland instituted a weekly radio program for three months of "plainchant and other ancient Church music." The University of Notre Dame held a series of services featuring congregational singing (with propers chanted by the "newly formed faculty-student choir") and concerts by the Moreau Seminary choir.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Excepting, perhaps, the polyphonic insertions into the *Credo* (*Et Incarnatus Est* of Josquin) and the third *Agnus Dei* ("Third Polyphonic" of Orlando de Lassus) – and of course that *TLS* was celebrated as a choral festival rather than a people's mass. See "Archdiocese of Chicago Pays Homage to Blessed Pius X and the Motu Proprio," CEC 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 75. [Plate II].

⁸⁸ Partial summaries, from which these references are drawn, can be found in CAT 39 (1953) 182-3; and CEC 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 73-75.

But if the staging of the Chicago celebration, for instance, played well in public (perhaps especially in Rome), it masked a far more equivocal reality. For another feature of the Chicago observance was the establishment by Cardinal Stritch *that very year* of the Archdiocese of Chicago's Commission on Sacred Music, now *fifty years* after Pius X had directed in the *motu proprio*:

For the exact carrying out of what has here been laid down, the Bishops, *if they have not already done so*, are to set up in their dioceses a special commission of persons truly competent in matters of sacred music, to which commission the duty of watching over the music performed in their churches should be entrusted . . . ⁸⁹

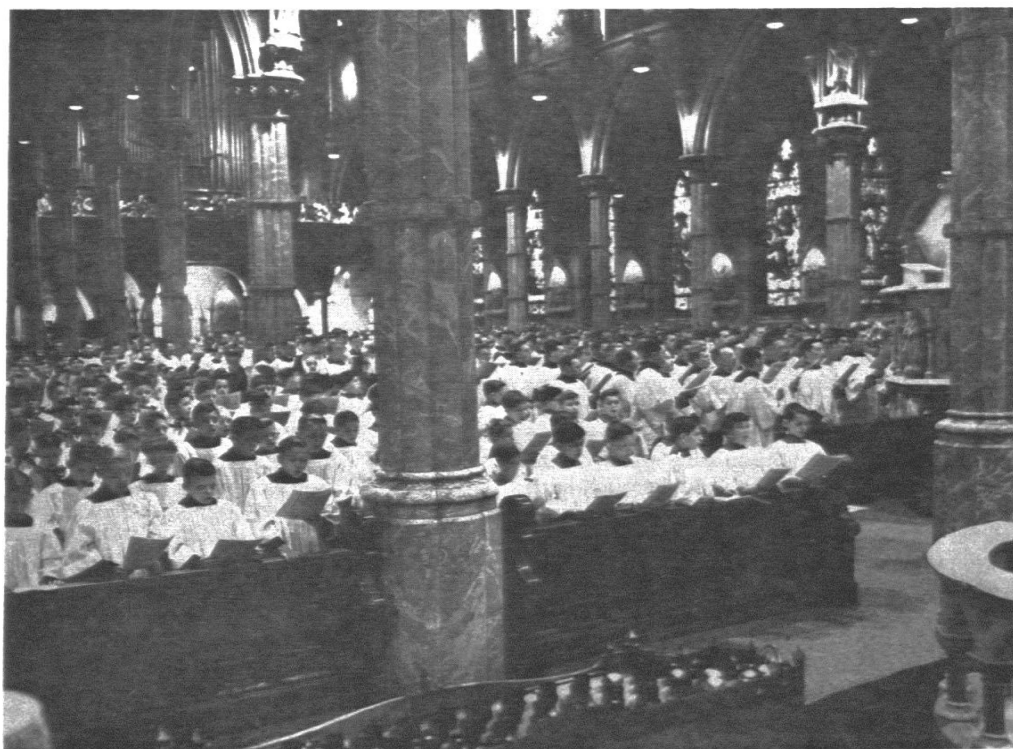
In the face of a half-century of non-compliance, and with all the bluster of Chicago, *Caecilia* ran a splashy self-congratulatory article (“The largest archdiocese in the United States legislates on music”).⁹⁰ Yet beneath a monarchical painting of Stritch (complete in ermine robes), the archbishop himself acknowledges the mixed record of *TLS* in Chicago, even as he offers remarkably tentative instructions on its present implementation:

This year we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the publication of the *Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X on Church Music. It seems therefore only fitting that, at this time especially, renewed efforts should be made in our own archdiocese to carry out its various prescriptions, *many of which have been forgotten during the past number of years*. *It is not expected of course that every choir and organist in the archdiocese will be able to fulfill all the demands of the Motu Proprio at once.*

⁸⁹ *TLS*, VIII. 24. Italics added.

⁹⁰ Rene P. Dosogne, “Sacred Music in the Archdiocese of Chicago,” *CEC* 81 no. 3 (March-April 1954) 93-95.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO PAYS HOMAGE TO BLESSED PIUS X
AND THE MOTU PROPRIO



1400 Boys and 100 Men Participated in Pontifical Mass, Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago November 7, 1953

Solemn Pontifical Mass celebrated by His EMINENCE, SAMUEL CARDINAL STRITCH, was sung at the Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago, November 7, 1953. In addition to the combined boys and men choirs of the archdiocese the participants included the Little Singers of the Wooden Cross (Pueri Cantores) from Paris, France, who interrupted their tour of the United States to take part in the commemoration program. Directors of the combined choirs were: RT. REV. MSGR. MAILLET, International President of the Pueri Cantores, VERY REV. MSGR. CHARLES METER, C.G.M., Mus. D., Secretary of the Archdiocesan Music Commission, and REV. JOSEPH MROCZKOWSKI, C.G.M. Organists were the VERY REV. MSGR. JOSEPH KUSH, C.G.M., and MR. AXEL NORDER.

PROGRAM

Ecce Sacerdos Magnus	<i>Elgar</i>
Tu Es Petrus	<i>Clemens Non Papa</i>
French Choir	
Proper of the Mass within the Octave of the Feast of All Saints	
Intriet, Gaudeamus	<i>Gregorian</i>
Kyrie, Mass XI, Orbis Factor	<i>Gregorian</i>
Gloria, Mass XI, Orbis Factor	<i>Gregorian</i>
Gradual, Timete Dominum	<i>Gregorian</i>
Alleluia	<i>Gregorian</i>
Sermon His EMINENCE SAMUEL CARDINAL STRITCH	
Credo III	<i>Gregorian</i>
Et Incarnatus Est	<i>Des Pres</i>
Offertory, Justorum Animae	<i>Gregorian</i>
Offertory Motet: Ave Verum	<i>Mozart</i>
Sanctus, Mass XI, Orbis Factor	<i>Gregorian</i>
Benedictus	
Agnus Dei: First two, Mass XI, Orbis Factor	<i>Gregorian</i>
Third Polyphonic	<i>De Lassus</i>
Communio, Beati mundo corde	<i>Gregorian</i>
Recessional: Noi Vogliamo Dio	<i>Italian Hymn</i>

Plate II. *Motu proprio* Celebration, Archdiocese of Chicago,
CEC 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 75.

But we do insist that every choir director and organist begin as soon as possible to bring about whatever changes may be necessary . . . ⁹¹

The mixed results at 50 years were of course not limited to Chicago. A representative overview of the American situation – one echoed numerous times in various venues – is voiced by Benedict Ehmann, editor of *The Catholic Choirmaster*, in 1951:

It was getting so, in certain circumstances and contexts, that mention of the name of Pius X in support of liturgical music reforms had the sound of a faded battle-cry. It would be met with annoyance and impatience. It made you look as if you had a one-track mind, an obsession with a name and an impractical vision. And now the name rings like a trumpet . . . rousing us from our defeat and despair . . . ⁹²

Typically, the very next article (celebrating the recent beatification of Pius, and entitled, “Pius X: The Turning of the Tide”⁹³) too puts an optimistic face on what was clearly a long struggle: by 1951 no triumph was proclaimable, merely the “turning of the tide.” “Flash occasions” of progress were decried in favor of “that gentle and solid advance that in the end assures success.”⁹⁴

This general picture of limited success is confirmed in three “snapshots” at significant intervals:

1915 Just following Pius X's death; first edition of US journal
The Catholic Choirmaster

⁹¹ Ibid., 93 (italics added). For an evidently successful boys' choir program in Chicago, see the Holy Week Service listings of “The Jesuit Choristers of Chicago, Ill.” at Holy Family Church, CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 22. This church, second oldest in Chicago, survivor of the great Chicago fire and recently restored, adjoins the renowned St. Ignatius College Preparatory School, which is still run by the Jesuits.

⁹² “*Ora Pro Nobis*,” CAT 37 (1951) 50. Italics added.

⁹³ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

1928 25th anniversary of *TLS*; *Divini cultus sanctitatem* of Pius XI

1953 50th anniversary; Montini letter on behalf of Pius XII⁹⁵; Paul
Hume's *Catholic Church Music*⁹⁶

1915

Writing in the very first issue of *The Catholic Choirmaster*, (February 1915), Leo P.

Manzetti⁹⁷ gives a mixed view:

The motu proprio of Pius X., November 22, 1903, which seemingly called for a thoroughgoing reform in Church Music has met with the enthusiastic cooperation of many; but, *as everyone knows*, many, and *perhaps these are the majority*, are still indifferent or adversely critical.⁹⁸

This issue opens appropriately with a memorial encomium to Pius X, the author (Very Rev.

E.R. Dyer, SS, D.D., President of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore and President of the

SSGA) somewhat apologetically (but tellingly) noting that "such a thorough and universal

reform in Church Music cannot be the work of a few years, perhaps not even of one

generation . . ."⁹⁹

⁹⁵ See below, p. 202.

⁹⁶ (New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1957). This book is actually first published in 1956, but furnishes a view from essentially the same period. Hume's book, though intended as a "how-to" choirmaster's handbook, is the most thorough of any hardback monograph in looking back at the progress of the *motu proprio* over 50 years in America.

⁹⁷ Manzetti was a significant figure in early-twentieth century Catholic music circles. In addition to being Music Director of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, he was a founding member with Nicola A. Montani and Rev. John M. Petter of the Society of St. Gregory in America, which published the journal *The Catholic Choirmaster* under his editorship. At St. Mary's he had a *schola cantorum* of seminarians rather renowned for its work in Gregorian chant. See below, pp. 321-2, in "Seminaries."

⁹⁸ Leo P. Manzetti, "The 'Motu Proprio' on Church Music," CAT 1 no. 1 (Feb 1915) 5. Italics added.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 2.

1928

On December 20, 1928, Pope Pius XI issued the great apostolic constitution *Divini cultus sanctitatem*, honoring the occasion of the 25th anniversary of *TLS*, while demonstrating concern over a fateful lack of cooperation:

It is thus of great importance that whatever is done to enhance and adorn the liturgy should be controlled by the laws and precepts of the Church . . . And this has been effected especially in sacred music . . . *It is greatly to be deplored, however, that in certain places these wisest of laws have not been fully observed*, and thus the fruit which they were intended to produce has been lost.¹⁰⁰

Closer to home, many witnesses confirm the picture from Rome in this period (c.1928).

Dom Ermin Vitry, OSB, one of the leading liturgical figures in the American church, touches on various specific ills while discussing the general dislike of chant:

Why People do not like the Chant

1. The loss of that special spiritual feeling which comes only with the experience of liturgical life.
2. The lack of positive leadership impossible to many priests who did not have the opportunity to study the sacred chant well.
3. The passive attitude of the laity in the liturgical services.
4. The incomplete formation of many of our choir-directors.
5. The deformed spirit of our mixed choirs.

“The picture,” concludes Dom Vitry, “looks dark. Perhaps it is well to see it thus.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Hayburn, 328-9 (italics added). And suggesting the reason for non-compliance: “We are well aware of the zeal and labor demanded by all which We have here ordained.” (Ibid., 332.)

¹⁰¹ Ermin Vitry, “Why People Do Not Like Gregorian Chant,” CAT 22 (1936) 10-12, 15; here 15. Dom Vitry (1884-1960) was a fairly major voice in the American liturgical ferment of the twentieth century, though it seems he could be polarizing and hence was somewhat isolated. A transplant from the Abbey of Maredsous in Belgium, where he was Director of Chant for ten years, he yet never found a Benedictine “home” in the US, residing longest with the Sisters of the Precious Blood at O’Fallon, Missouri. Holding a music doctorate from Brussels, he was most prominently editor of *Caecilia* from 1941 to 1950, and headed

1953

Twenty-five years on, the picture is hardly more encouraging. For the Jubilee of the motu proprio, Pius XII directed Monsignor Giovanni B. Montini to write a letter in observance of the occasion (significantly addressed to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, on which much was felt to depend). The future Pope Paul VI reflected,

The suitability of [the motu proprio] to present-day needs still appears evident; its usefulness has, indeed, *increased* in a certain sense. . . . notwithstanding the good fruit already borne by the motu proprio in the field of sacred music, *it cannot yet be said that its wise norms are always and everywhere observed*. Unfortunately, it can *frequently* be noted that the music rendered in churches is *unsatisfactory* – either because of insufficient inspiration or because of technical imperfection in its form and inadequate preparation of those who render it.¹⁰²

The validity of the above sentiments for the American context is confirmed in a valuable summary picture (c.1953) provided by a Jesuit priest, worth quoting at length for its inclusion of specific details:

In the United States we can with justifiable modesty point to a certain amount of success in carrying out the prescriptions of the *motu proprio*. But much of the progress that has been made, it must be confessed, is

up the summer Music in Liturgy Program at the University of Notre Dame from 1948 almost to his death. (Rev. Michael Mathis, CSC of Notre Dame, was his “longest and closest associate,” stating in a letter to Vitry that “you were the one who first suggested to me a liturgy program for Notre Dame University.”) (Michael A. Mathis, CSC to Ermin Vitry, OSB, 20 October 1947. Archives, Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, folio 19-75.) Vitry was probably the most prolonged and pronounced American voice for the inviolability of chant, “dedicated to the work of restoration of the sacred song and of unfolding the spiritual power and content of the Chant. For him it was not song for song’s sake. It was the song that expressed the inner life of the Church.” (Right Rev. Charles P. Schmitt, V.G., Funeral Sermon *Caecilia* 60, 111. See e.g. Vitry, “Music and Prayer,” *Worship* 25 no. 11 [Oct-Nov 1951] 549-558.) His funeral was held at the Archabbey of St. Meinrad (Vitry’s “home away from home”), for which the entire liturgy faculty at the University of Notre Dame cancelled classes and drove the four hundred miles to the abbey. (ND archives folio 19-74.)

¹⁰² “Pope Pius XII Commemorates Motu Proprio,” CEC 81 no. 3 (March-April 1954) 91. Italics added.

due to sporadic and privately initiated effort. The St. Gregory Society, which has never had a national following, is apparently having diminishing influence as the years go on. Privately sponsored schools and institutes of liturgical music have helped to spread the word, but naturally to a rather restricted clientele. A certain amount of activity has been manifested by diocesan commissions in various places, but frequently the programs that are initiated by these commissions do not reach fruition because the people who would be responsible for carrying them out do not have sufficient time, or enthusiasm, or education; sometimes they lack all three. All too often these programs are launched with a bang and disappear with a whimper.¹⁰³

Throughout the 60-year period under discussion, three levels of reaction to *TLS* are regularly described: an enthusiastic reception (with varying emphases/ interpretations); a virulent opposition; and in the middle, a vast, withering *indifference* to the whole enterprise, increasingly noted as a troubling indifference to the importance of liturgy in general. Of the three groups, this last, “to whom music is a matter of supreme indifference,” is seen as far and away the largest (and most negatively influential) in the American church. To them P. Hume lays blame for “the apathy and mediocrity that presently have a stranglehold on the music of the Church.”¹⁰⁴

3.2.1.2 *What did Pius X anticipate?*

Fifty years after the promulgation of *TLS*, in a piece lauding the recently beatified Pius X, John Selner, SS referred to the progress of the music reform. Seeking an optimistic tone, Fr. Selner wrestles with the difficulty of describing what was obviously a mixed picture: acknowledging that “to some extent this blindness [to the ‘right rule’ of music]

¹⁰³ Francis J. Guentner, S.J., preface to Hume, *Catholic Church Music*, viii.

¹⁰⁴ Hume, 2.

continues,” he refers vaguely to “the consoling progress” of musical “enlightenment.” It seems apparent that it was not clear even to those at the time where the progress of *TLS* really stood. Selner however hints at a more frank appraisal, in lauding Pius X as not only artist but “prophet”: “he himself was better aware than anybody how slow and tortuous would be the reform in church music.”¹⁰⁵ The author is clearly trying to put a brave face on a less-than-ideal situation: reform has been tortuously slow, but at least, it is claimed, Blessed Pius foresaw that. In a similar vein, it is elsewhere noted that Pius consoled M. Charles Bordes (founder of the Schola Cantorum and Choir of Saint-Gervais in Paris) with the statement, “Don't be discouraged, we will see the world coming over to our side *little by little*.”¹⁰⁶ These comments then raise the question: what *were* Pius X's expectations for the *motu proprio*?

Pius certainly understood, both from his knowledge of church history and especially (“when We reflect on Our own experience”) from his own pastoral practice, that music reform could be a quagmire where even angels might fear to tread. Near the very beginning of *TLS*, Pius asserts that among *all* liturgical abuses, the abuse of music is “*one of the commonest, one of the most difficult to eradicate*”; indeed, when everything else liturgical is well tended (“the beauty and sumptuousness of the temple, the splendor and precise performance of ceremonies, the attendance of the clergy, the gravity and piety of officiating

¹⁰⁵ “Blessed Pius X – Artist and Prophet,” *CAT* 39 (1953) 146, 185-7, here 146.

¹⁰⁶ Joan Marie Monaghan, “The Life of Blessed Pius X,” *CAT* 39 (1953) 107-110, 144; here 109. Italics added.

ministers”),¹⁰⁷ the state of music is often “*deplorable*.” He is well aware that attempts at music reform had a long and checkered history:

[T]here certainly is a *constant tendency* in sacred music to *neglect* the right principles of an art used in the service of the liturgy, principles *expressed very clearly* in the laws of the Church, in the decrees of general and provincial councils, and in the *repeated commands* of the sacred congregations and of the supreme pontiffs, Our predecessors.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, as early as the Venice pastoral letter he expressed the notion that “true ecclesiastical chant” had actual “*adversaries*,” and that they remained in a “deplorable obstinacy.”

Thus there is no doubt that Pius understood the intractability of the situation; moreover, in both the Venice letter and *TLS* he shows that he has reflected on the reasons why:

1895, Pastoral Letter of Venice

1. The “great esteem enjoyed by musical composers,” who “believed in good faith that any musical form might be adopted in church.”¹⁰⁹
2. The ease of obtaining impressive effects with small forces in “such modern melodies”: facility of execution issuing in music “deafening in its noise.”
3. “The people like it.” Profane music is favored by those lacking “true and good musical education,” indulging themselves in the “pleasure of a depraved taste.”
4. The claim that numbers would dwindle in church if theatrical music were suppressed.
5. Musicians think chant masses are not impressive enough, too short to “please.”

¹⁰⁷ *TLS*, Introduction. Here *Papal Documents on Sacred Music*. Wienandt 161.

¹⁰⁸ *TLS*, Introduction. Here Hayburn, 223. Italics added.

¹⁰⁹ Hayburn, 215.

6. "Patriotism": Liturgical chant (both Gregorian and polyphonic) is "German music."¹¹⁰

The *motu proprio* speaks in more theoretical terms:

Tra le sollecitudini, 1903

1. The "changeable nature" of music.
2. The changing tastes and customs of people over time.
3. The influence of secular and theatrical music on Church music.
4. The "pleasure excited by the music itself, which it may not be easy to retain within proper limits."
5. The obstinacy of "many prejudices" about music which "remain, even among persons of great piety and high authority."¹¹¹

Force of Law

There can be little doubt that Pius intended the *motu proprio* to be a legally and hence morally binding document for the universal Church. Hayburn calls the force of the Pontiff's language "unique and final."¹¹² The concluding sentence of the Introduction effects an intensive assertion of the document's authority, by the use of four juxtaposed phrases:

1. A "juridical code of sacred music."
2. With the "fullness of Our Apostolic Authority."
3. The "force of law."

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 216.

¹¹¹ TLS, Introduction. Hayburn, 223.

¹¹² Hayburn, 222.

4. “Impose its scrupulous observance on all.”¹¹³

Pius evidently believed that an enormous component of past failures in church music reform had to do with education. Seminarians and musicians needed to be trained technically in music, but more importantly educated in the “right principles and laws of sacred music”; for “[w]henever the clergy and their choirmasters clearly realise [sic] these principles, good Church music at once begins to flourish spontaneously, as may be seen in many places.”¹¹⁴ Thus, part of the function of *TLS* was to be educative about these principles; but by being made crystal clear, an explicit force was attached. The Introduction is concluded: “Wherefore, in order that no one may in the future put forward as an excuse that he does not rightly know his duty, in order that all possible uncertainty concerning laws already made may be removed, We consider it advisable to sum up shortly the principles . . . ”¹¹⁵ One of the reasons that the force of the *motu proprio* later became something of a question was that the document contained no specific penalties for disobedience. Nineteenth-century music regulation regularly contained vituperative threats for non-compliance, including loss of employment and even physical

¹¹³ One translation of the sentence reads, “And therefore We publish this Our Instruction *motu proprio et ex certa scientia*, and We desire with all the authority of Our apostolic office that it have the force of law as a canonical code concerning sacred music, and We impose upon all by Our own signature the duty of the most exact obedience to it.” Hayburn, 223. Nevertheless, as late as 1954, the question of the canonical status of *TLS* was being debated: see Rev. Juan Navarro, R., “Is the Motu Proprio of Blessed Pius Tenth on Sacred Music Binding in Conscience?”

¹¹⁴ Respighi letter, in Hayburn, 232.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

punishment.¹¹⁶ Sarto's Patriarchal letter of Venice similarly had contained stronger and more specific language than the subsequent *motu proprio*:

I have resolved to name a committee, which shall have as its duty the supervision of the *exact observance* of the regulations . . . [which] I am about to *lay down*.

11. Henceforth, beginning with the coming month of September, *there shall not be sung in any church whatsoever* within the Patriarchate of Venice, . . . any music that has not previously been submitted to the Commission . . .

12. All the Reverend Pastors *will submit to me, within the space of four months*, the full name and address of the organists of their churches . . . and *they will command these organists* to bring before the Commission the music they ordinarily play.

15. I hereby *impose . . . the obligation* . . . [You are] hereby advised that the Patriarch . . . has decided to resort to *canonical penalties* against those who do not comply with all and each of the articles . . . I have imposed in virtue of *holy obedience*.¹¹⁷

In the case of non-compliance in Venice, “the Reverend Pastors will refer the matter to me, and I shall take necessary action, since the present state of affairs *can no longer be tolerated*.”¹¹⁸ This language is a far cry from Fr. Selner's “slow and tortuous,” and M. Bordes' “little by little.” It would be echoed in Pius' letter to Cardinal Respighi, one month after the *motu proprio*, seeing to the enforcement of *TLS* in Rome itself. Aware of being in a “fishbowl,” and that disobedience at home would be an intolerable example, Pius' stated expectation, at least for the Eternal City, was complete compliance:

[E]very abuse of this kind has become intolerable and must be removed. . . . [The music] of this city *shall answer completely to Our instructions*. . . . We desire that these things be entirely suppressed . . .

¹¹⁶ See above, Chapter 2, pp. 145-8.

¹¹⁷ Text of Venice letter in Hayburn, 213-218. All italics added.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 218.

And you, my Lord Cardinal, will *allow no exception, brook no delay . . .*
since the thing has to be done, let it be done *at once and firmly*.¹¹⁹

As shown above, *Tra le Sollecitudini* internally gives itself the unequivocal force of law, and Pius does insist “that these instructions be exactly carried out.”¹²⁰ Nevertheless, *TLS* is noticeably more restrained in tone than its surrounding documents. Perhaps Pius realized the difficulty of a snap-compliance on a world-wide horizon. More likely, as is evident in *TLS* as well as other texts, we are seeing his desire to *persuade* rather than *coerce*. In the Votum of 1893, Sarto addresses sometimes over-zealous Caecilian musicians: “We would like to remind them that *fortiter* should be accompanied by *suaviter*, which is a fundamental rule for any reform.”¹²¹ He further counsels that “We must remember that every reform brings about some reaction.” Perhaps reflecting on his experience in Venice, Pius openly acknowledges later in the Respighi letter that

when the principles [of sacred music] are neglected, neither prayers nor entreaties, nor severe commands, nor threats of canonical punishment succeed in improving matters, so easy is it for passion, or at any rate for shameful and inexcusable ignorance, to elude the will of the Church and to continue year after year in the same regrettable manner.¹²²

He exhorts his diocese to “help Us with this much-needed reform, not only with the submission that bows to commands . . . but rather with that readiness which comes from a clear conviction that the commands are evidently necessary and reasonable.”¹²³ Aware

¹¹⁹ Hayburn, 233. Italics added.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 230.

¹²¹ Ibid., 210.

¹²² Ibid., 232.

¹²³ Ibid.

again of the eyes of the world, he reminds his people that “nowhere should an example of loving and filial obedience to Our commands be more carefully shown than among this first and noblest portion of Christ's flock . . .”¹²⁴

So Pius hopes for filial and genial obedience, and he believes that such comes from being clearly convinced of the necessity and rationality of laws. How was that convincing to take place? The penultimate section of *TLS*, “The Principal Means of Procuring Good Sacred Music,” offers both carrot and stick: Diocesan commissions will exercise oversight, but *education* – in seminaries, in choir schools, in higher schools of Church music – will be the *suaviter* way. And it wasn't only book-learning Pius was after; he knew that experience was worth a thousand words:

Plainchant, when it is restored so satisfactorily to its original purity, as it was handed down by the Fathers . . . is seen to be sweet, graceful, very easy to learn and possessed of a beauty so new and unexpected that wherever it is introduced it at once excites a real enthusiasm among the young singers. *Now whenever it becomes a pleasure to fulfill a duty the thing is done with more goodwill, and its fruit is more lasting.*¹²⁵

Thus Pius closes *TLS* not with dire threats but with a petitionary exhortation, meant to rally and unite the “troops”: “Finally, we desire all [in positions of leadership] to support these wise reforms, which have been long desired and unanimously hoped for by all, in order that no injury be done to the authority of the Church . . .”¹²⁶

In conclusion, the reform of Church music under Pius X appears to be marked by a combination of deep conviction and certitude (“*motu proprio et ex certa scientia*”), and

¹²⁴ Hayburn, 232.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 234. Italics added.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 231.

sensitivity toward the need to communicate this conviction to others as vision, through experience: in short, as *participable*. But unless the regulations on sacred music were “exactly carried out,” unless everyone *including the people* chanted, the experience could not have the means to take hold, to become convincing, and thus to succeed from inner assent. The evidence suggests that Pius did not believe in a “gradual” reform, but wanted the Church to go “cold turkey,” and to give it the legal means to do so – now “insisting on them once more.” Fr. Selner is paying St. Pius a dubious compliment, that he “prophesied” the slow achievement of reform. Pius understood the “little by little,” not in reference to *implementation* of the reform, but rather to the *acclimation* of the faithful of all ranks once the reforms were, with “no exception and no delay,” put into place. The Respighi letter confirms this final interpretation:

By putting the matter off the difficulty would not become less, it would become greater: since the thing has to be done, let it be done at once and firmly. . . . At first the novelty will surprise some; very likely some choir-masters or directors will not be quite prepared for it, but little by little things will right themselves and everyone will find in the perfect correspondence of the music to liturgical rules and to the proper character of the chanting of the Psalms a beauty and rightness which they had not felt before.¹²⁷

3.2.1.3 Method

“It is reasonable to assume that an accurate appraisal of the state of Catholic Church music in the United States today is hardly possible. One can give an approximate estimate, gathered from various sources and from one’s own observations.”

¹²⁷ Hayburn, 233.

So wrote J. Alfred Schehl, A.A.G.O., when asked by *Caecilia* in 1953 to give his “Reminiscences of Fifty Years” as a Catholic church musician.¹²⁸ His comment points up the necessary degree of approximation in construing a history of *Tra le sollecitudini*. But Schehl was confident enough about his own experiences to summarize and reflect on them, and with enough such witnesses and at a certain level of generalization, one can approach an appraisal of integrity and usefulness.

The major sources for this dissertation are church-music and ecclesiastical journals, which contain an abundant quantity of entries about “Catholic music” over the period under discussion. As noted in the introduction, monographs on (church) music history pay scant attention to the period under discussion.¹²⁹ Later in the story, however, books from the emerging liturgical movement begin to include chapters on music, and give mounting evidence about an evolving stance toward *TLS* and the role of music in liturgy. Our major source, the journal articles, tend to fall into two primary categories: first, those discussing (almost always defending) the *motu proprio* or some specific aspect of it (especially is there a spate of articles on Gregorian Chant); and second, those depicting the condition of Catholic church music and commenting on (usually bemoaning!) it.

One can engage the large quantity of journal articles with a method drawing on (something like) Biblical exegesis: *multiple attestation*, for example, lends credence to judgments about the liturgical music scene; the criterion of *negative association* (acknowledging an otherwise unflattering picture) similarly carries weight. In the literature

¹²⁸ Schehl, “Reminiscences of Fifty Years,” 36.

¹²⁹ See Introduction, pages 2-3 and footnote 3.

one often encounters the “everybody knows . . .” construction, where a particular point is taken for granted as acknowledged by all; such a phrase suggests an accepted view or strong sense of what is currently “the case.”¹³⁰ Those active in the field similarly write from a stance of having a strong “feel” about the situation from their (often long) experience. A prominent figure in the on-going deliberations and disputes over church music for this period, for example, is the English Jesuit Clifford Howell, who demonstrates the limits and possibilities of reporting from the field when asked, “*What is the actual state of [church music] affairs in this country?*”

In reply to that question I can but generalize. I do not know every church in England and Wales; but I do know a good many and can make guesses from what I have observed.

If somebody else has preached in more parishes than I have, then his guess will be better than mine. But neither of us could give an accurate answer. The real facts could not be known unless some sort of questionnaire were sent to every parish, and the results tabulated.¹³¹

Fr. Howell goes on, however, to give his considered estimation in a blistering account of the general situation in England.¹³²

And in fact, some surveys by questionnaire were attempted. The most comprehensive were conducted over a two-to-three-year period (1951-53) by the Rev. Cletus P. Madsen, under the auspices of the National Catholic Music Educators Association. This double-survey addressed Catholic schools, on the one hand, and “The Present Status of Liturgical Music in the United States” in seminaries, novitiates, and parishes “all over

¹³⁰ See for example Dom Vitry’s article “Why People Do Not Like Gregorian Chant” (n. 101 above).

¹³¹ Clifford Howell, S.J., “Let the People Sing at Mass,” CAT 36 (1950) 131-135, 144; here 132.

¹³² Ibid., 132-3.

America” on the other.¹³³ The other significant survey was the basis of the 1957 book *Catholic Church Music* by Paul Hume, who received written responses from some 468 choir directors, teaching sisters, pastors, etc. from across the nation.¹³⁴ The “hard data” from these surveys will be incorporated into the discussions below. But the report of witnesses often depended on their perspective of the “glass” as “half-full or half-empty”; an article entitled “The Turning of the Tide,” for example, attempts an optimistic view of the future of the *motu proprio* while acknowledging a history of past stumblings. It becomes clear that the picture of TLS in America was a mixed one, and often contemporary people weren’t sure themselves how to understand the document or evaluate its progress.

The pattern of analysis in journal articles is often found to be: assess, analyze, address. That is, the church music scene is described, either in a particular aspect or in general; the reasons for the described situation are adduced (often a fault-finding exercise); and finally, curatives are recommended. We will follow this general pattern in looking at the half-century 1903-1953. From the testimony of contemporary Catholics, the “typical” parish mass will be described; various analyses of “What went wrong?” will follow; and suggested remedial plans will be presented. The impact of *Tra le sollecitudini* would not be fairly drawn without a look also at “What went right,” as well as the discussion engendered of certain key elements, such as Gregorian chant and congregational participation. It is

¹³³ See Rev. Cletus P. Madsen, “To Pray in Beauty”: *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* vol. 5 no. 2 (Oct 1952) 6-7; vol. 5 no. 5 (April 1953) 7, 9; vol. 5 no. 6 (June 1953) 18-19. The entire survey is published in John B. Paul, ed., *Music Education: The Proceedings of the Workshop on Music Education, conducted at the Catholic University of America from June 12 to June 23, 1953* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1954). The results are summarized in *Worship* 27 no. 12 (November 1953) 564-6.

¹³⁴ See above, n. 96.

fortunate for the period under discussion to have in the journals an abundance of first-hand accounts, and the frequent use of quotation in what follows will serve to allow these contemporary witnesses to speak in their own words.

3.2.1.4 Parish Sunday Mass

“It might take a century”

As early as 1869, Bishop Louis Lootens of Idaho noted,

In the city in which [I] was born, the offices of the Church were about equally divided between modern music and Gregorian chant. On the great festivals of the year, the music was very grand and artistically performed. And yet it was a notorious fact, that on those days, many people who, on ordinary occasions, would not have for any consideration omitted going to High Mass, in their parish church, were satisfied with a Low mass, or filled the convent churches or public oratories, and heard High Mass there. The reason they gave was, *that the music prevented them from praying.*¹³⁵

Nearly a century later, Thomas Day echoed that sentiment in a striking boyhood memory of Sunday Mass in the 1940’s:

[After the pastor announced the next Mass would be High Mass instead of Low,] All the members of my family looked at one another in terror. You would have thought the pastor had just announced that there was a bomb hidden somewhere in the church. My family did not need any discussion. We all got up at once and headed for the exits, as did three-fourths of the congregation. . . . I can remember the relief we all felt when we stepped into the sunshine. It was like escaping from a dangerous coal mine, just before the roof collapsed. Even at that tender age I knew that in our relatively prosperous parish (which claimed to have “one of the finest adult choirs in the archdiocese”) only the deaf willingly attended High Mass.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Lootens, *Extracts from the Roman Gradual*, 9. Italics added.

¹³⁶ Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can’t Sing* (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 42.

If the ideals of *Tra le sollecitudini* were to be realized, it was obvious (yet implicit) that they would require the context of the *Missa cantata* (Sung Mass), which in popular ecclesiastical parlance could be either “High Mass” (all the parts sung) or “Solemn High Mass” (same, but complete with priest, deacon and sub-deacon.) Normally the “High Mass” on Sunday was the “Parish Mass,” celebrated by the pastor and representing the symbolic gathering of the entire parish in worship. Here it would be that the directives of the *motu proprio* would find their “primary and indispensable” context: at this sung mass the people would learn to take their part in singing the Ordinary to Gregorian chant, and the choirs would provide the propers and polyphonic music, all according to *TLS*.¹³⁷ But the pictures drawn above tell quite a different story; though isolated vignettes, they are repeatedly and resoundingly corroborated in the sources of the time.¹³⁸ An early colorful description, from Washington D.C. in 1906:

In the meantime the ladies trill and sigh with the same assurance as of yore, in their impassioned rendition of arias adapted from the operas, and orchestras fiddle and blast away to the wildest of the prohibited compositions. Parodies still continue. . . . The fugues in the Gloria and Credo are just as interminable as ever, and the personnel of Church choirs has not been interfered with. The amount of energy

¹³⁷ See chart outlining the respective duties of the clergy, choir, and congregation in the mass parts, in Gerald Ellard, S.J., *Men at Work at Worship: America Joins the Liturgical Movement* (New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940) 177.

¹³⁸ The problem is attested in Sarto’s own words in the pastoral Letter of Venice, 1893: “And thus the people are satisfied [at sung Mass], for when the *Credo* is over, the Mass is over for them, and they make for the door . . . [I]t has become a settled belief among the masses that the *Missa cantata* does not satisfy the precept, and the clergy, almost persuaded of the profanation of such Masses with music, help confirm the false opinion; and you will find that in almost all the churches a Low Mass is celebrated during the course of the Solemn Mass – another argument to induce the people to leave the temple at any part of the Solemn Mass, although that is, as a rule, especially offered up for them.” Hayburn, 216.

which has been expended to effect the reforms in many localities where resources abound, is zero.¹³⁹

And a later witness, from Los Angeles c. 1945:

Active participation of the laity in the solemn services of the Church is still a dream, . . . There is scarcely a parish in this diocese, or in most dioceses for that matter, where the solemn Mass is really *the* parochial Mass, in which all families and organizations are actively represented. Where, for example, do congregations answer the salutations and exhortations of the Celebrant, express their faith by chanting the *Credo*, join together in begging God's mercy in the *Kyrie*, or pray for peace in the *Agnus Dei*?¹⁴⁰

Fr. Richard Ginder sums up the popular fate of Gregorian chant by 1947: the *Liber*

Usualis, "put in the hands of a congregation . . . would be only so much abracadabra."¹⁴¹

Speaking in general terms, the picture from 1903 to 1953 ran thus: not only had American Catholic congregations *not* been engaged in active singing within the liturgy, but parish choirs had continued as ever before, leading to a general disaffection toward sung masses, and popularity of the Low Mass as fulfilling one's obligation in the least troublesome manner possible. In other words, the *context* for the fulfillment of the *motu proprio* had, if anything, suffered erosion in the course of fifty years. The Bishop of Paterson, NJ expressed it thus:

It is regrettable, yet nevertheless true, that many Catholics do not seem to realize their personal obligation of actively participating in the Divine Sacrifice of the Mass. For reasons which are not pertinent to today's discourse, it would seem that in this country many Catholics

¹³⁹ "Clericus" [anon.], "Where Are We in the Church Music Reform?" *AER* 35 (October 1906) 426-434, here 433.

¹⁴⁰ Robert E. Brennan, *Pange Lingua: Reflections on the Liturgy* (Los Angeles: The Tidings, 1945) 146. Italics original.

¹⁴¹ *The Priest* 3 (November 1947) 812.

are satisfied in avoiding mortal sin by being present at an integral Low Mass on Sundays. . . . In their attendance they are never directly or actively interested in the prescribed prayers . . . and in some instances they actually seem to regret the half-hour that they must spend under penalty of mortal sin.¹⁴²

Another bishop (in 1954 Communist East Germany) questions the prospect, in the modern context, of even the *concept* of the Parish Mass:

As a matter of fact, shouldn't we ask ourselves repeatedly whether our "normal" parishes are really true communities – whether the number of faithful is not so large that they cannot any longer truly "assemble"? Are our faithful under "normal" circumstances perhaps so imbued with the spirit of individualism that they no longer have a desire for community, but only wish to be left alone?¹⁴³

The reasons for these developments are complex and important for the understanding of TLS, and will be taken up in the next section. For the moment, it is important simply to substantiate the picture.

3.2.1.5 General Picture

We began with the Sunday Parish mass as the *fons et origo*, but of course it sat within a larger context, about which there was much description and discussion, and in fact significant corroboration in the literature. A summation with clarity and perhaps the greatest claim to authenticity is that from the aforementioned survey of Rev. Cletus

¹⁴² Most Rev. Thomas H. McLaughlin, "A Bishop Speaks on the Vox Populi," CAT 31 (1945) 102.

¹⁴³ Most Rev. Wilhelm Weskamm, "Formation and Life of the Parish Community," OFW 28 no. 3 (Feb 1954) 138-152, here 142.

Madsen.¹⁴⁴ In June 1953 Fr. Madsen presented his findings at the Catholic University of America (best quoted verbatim, here from a *precis* in *Worship*¹⁴⁵) as

“The Present Status of Liturgical Music in the United States.”

- I. The philosophy behind the use of music in our Catholic churches is either totally or at least partially unknown to the large majority of our faithful.
- II. Except for an occasional hymn at Benediction or at a Novena, the American Catholic is almost completely unvocal at divine services. Singing congregations are the rare exception if we eliminate schools.
- III. The type of singing heard in our churches is still largely unliturgical except where the school children do the singing.
- IV. The quality of singing is quite generally inartistic and therefore unworthy of . . . ornamenting the texts.
- V. The quality of organ playing in our churches is similar to that of the singing. Too often the instrument is used as a concert vehicle instead of an accompanying complement to the liturgical vocal parts.
- VI. Appropriate training is one of the demands of the Church, and here we note the one hopeful oasis in the status of liturgical music in America. Vast changes for the better are taking place in this field of education. . . .

- .
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- 6) *The Parish Choir.* The vast majority of parishes use children’s choirs exclusively. These do try in many cases to carry out the ideals of the Church to some extent. . . . Many of these however omit essential parts of the singing demanded by the Church. The Church’s ideal of choirs of men and boys is still lacking in most of our parishes. Where such exist the music comes very close, however, to the ideals of the Church. Most adult choirs are either female or mixed and, to judge from our survey, most of them only partially carry out the liturgical norms in their singing.

¹⁴⁴ See above, 213-4, and n. 133.

¹⁴⁵ Rev. Cletus Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” *Worship* 27 no. 12 (November 1953) 564-6. Text as given in Madsen, with Roman numerals; portions edited.

- 7) *The Congregation*. Only extremely isolated instances exist of the congregation taking its due part in the singing of liturgical music. Generally speaking, little or no attempt is made to tackle this problem.¹⁴⁶

Fr. Madsen, not unmindful of the “many amazing efforts . . . being made today,” nevertheless offers the summary judgment that “A tremendous chasm exists between the standards set up by the Church in the field of liturgical music and our observance of them.”¹⁴⁷

Further on we will review some of the “things that went right” under the influence of the *motu proprio*. But even where much was accomplished under the banner of “the cause of liturgical music,” often the fundamental liturgical project of congregational singing became a proverbial “elephant in the room”: it was conveniently ignored. As a voice from the 1950s described, “[M]ost pastors would turn pale green at the thought of introducing the practice [of people singing] into their own churches. So would many congregations. And, worst of all, so would some choir directors.”¹⁴⁸ Another voice from 1954, a college student, both corroborates this general picture while showing an astute recognition of Pius’ main interest:

Where do we stand today? We have centers for the revival of sacred music, congresses of musicians, periodicals, demonstrations on chant, and schools of study and research. In this field there has been great progress, but we still lack the main feature of the reform of Pius X – active participation of the laity. So much attention has been given to the other phases of the restoration, that *we have overlooked the fact that*

¹⁴⁶ Note that this is only ten years prior to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*!

¹⁴⁷ Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” 564.

¹⁴⁸ Hume, 84.

*the pope was stressing lay participation and that most of the other phases of the reform are aids to the accomplishment of his primary aim.*¹⁴⁹

The English picture, estimated by Fr. Clifford Howell in 1950, undoubtedly parallels in large measure the American scene:

- a. Hymns. Most parishes know very few. There are about ten hymns that one can count on as being known practically everywhere. . . . Parishes in which none are known beyond the “same old ten” usually sing even those ten very badly, with a large proportion of the people not opening their mouths at all.
- b. Vespers and Compline. . . . I do not know a single parish where Vespers or Compline are sung in Latin *by the people*. I have heard of about five churches where Vespers or Compline are sung *in English* by the people.
- c. The Mass. I doubt whether as many as twenty churches have their *people* singing *Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei* as a normal thing every Sunday. Personally I know of only five, but hope with all my heart that the other fifteen exist elsewhere, than in my imagination.

Further, I would guess that another fifty churches have their people singing *Credo* as a normal thing, and the other Mass-chants as an occasional thing.

I would guess that in about a thousand (or more) churches the Mass is not normally sung at all on Sundays; that in about six hundred churches, though Mass is normally Sung, the singing is monopolized [*sic*] by the choir while the people remain silent.¹⁵⁰

Fr. Howell concludes trenchantly, “There are about two thousand parishes in England and Wales; it is nearly fifty years since the promulgation of Pope Pius X’s *motu proprio*, and so the above picture (if my guesses are anywhere near right) is shocking in the extreme.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Mary Clement, “Sacred Music and the Liturgy,” in *St. Pius X* (Detroit: Marygrove College, 1954) 54. Italics added.

¹⁵⁰ Rev. Clifford Howell, S.J., “Let the People Sing at Mass,” *CAT* 36 (1950) 132-3.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

3.2.2 Analysis: What Went Wrong?

“It is questionable whether it can be done in this country.”¹⁵²

Now, where in the wide world are Catholics more ignorant of their great inheritance in this noble chant, than among ourselves on this continent? Where are the laity more indifferent and so far anti-Catholic in spirit; and where are some clergy more at the mercy of cheap musical trash they tolerate or patronize; about which they seem incapable of forming a judgment in accordance with historical knowledge and artistic taste?¹⁵³

On the whole *Tra le sollecitudini*, from its promulgation to its golden anniversary in 1953, simply had a difficult time of it in the United States. This problematic journey, with its many side-roads and detours, is abundantly chronicled in the literature, where general responses or reactions to the *motu proprio* might be seen to fall into five categories:

1. Active support
2. Non-awareness
3. Awareness but misunderstanding
4. Passive opposition: Awareness but indifference
5. Active opposition

These categories are populated as easily by clergy and musicians as by lay Catholics, and are by no means mutually exclusive: *Misunderstanding*,¹⁵⁴ for example, often characterized those vocally supporting *TLS* as well as those actively opposing it, to say nothing of those

¹⁵² N.a., “The Liturgical Chant,” *AER* 2 no. 1 (1890) 20-29, here 22.

¹⁵³ Stockley, “Pope and the Reform” Part I, 281.

¹⁵⁴ The “correct” understanding of *TLS* is of course not an easy matter, and will be approached in the course of this dissertation. For the present we might simply refer to patent mis-readings, such as the notion that *TLS* essentially had to do with women in choirs, or that the participation of the faithful was not a signal element.

who “cared not a rap,” as one organist put it. What might be noticed from the distribution of these categories, what is attested frequently in the journals, is the overwhelming weight of response toward *TLS* on the negative side, especially as those who were simply unaware or indifferent were said to be the huge majorities. To be sure *TLS* had its supporters, and in fact it is the supporters who are most vocally represented in print (openly opposing the papacy in print on this issue would of course have been considered unacceptable or certainly risky); and while occasionally an optimistic picture is attempted, it is these very supporters who generally provide the most pessimistic (and undoubtedly realistic) view of the American scene:

There is perhaps no single subject, atheistic communism alone excepted, on which the Holy See has spoken more frequently or more earnestly in our days; certainly there is no major direction of the papacy in our age that has been so resisted, evaded, thwarted in its execution.¹⁵⁵

3.2.2.1 *Early Reception*

A lot of American eyebrows were raised at the first brush with the *motu proprio*. Those who were even aware of the document were baffled that the papacy would involve itself in such a “small” matter as music. *TLS* seemed out-of-step, “a harsh law, full of unnecessary and small changes.”¹⁵⁶ Was the pontiff qualified to speak musically? Did music fall under the purview of the infallible magisterium?¹⁵⁷ Even clergy, feeling it “impossible to carry out the pope's directions,” regarded the regulation as “something new

¹⁵⁵ Gerald Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” in *Men at Work at Worship*, 147.

¹⁵⁶ Joan Marie Monaghan, “The Life of Blessed Pius X,” *CAT* 39 (1953), 109.

¹⁵⁷ Manzetti, “The ‘Motu Proprio’ on Church Music,” 5-6.

or entirely uncalled for.”¹⁵⁸ It would undoubtedly become obsolete after this pope's death, it was said, and in any event music was thought “entirely secondary and not one of the important and pressing questions of the times.”¹⁵⁹

Indeed even in Rome itself the *motu proprio* had not always received a cordial reception, antagonists spreading rumors of its “suspicious” origin.¹⁶⁰ That suspicion was taken up by opponents in the United States who “said that the eventual decree on church music was all but inveigled from Pius X by some musical crank who, so the allegation continues, even wrote most of it, the Pope supposedly adding a bit here and there and signing his name.”¹⁶¹

And was not the document intended only for Rome? “The Pope’s words apply only to Rome and Italy” was a common reaction,¹⁶² reflecting the simple geographical distance of the United States from Rome as well as its status (at least until 1909) as a missionary territory. To some Americans it seemed *TLS* might be suitable for the “Old World,” but “over here” “the taste of individual congregations, expediency, practicability and such like

¹⁵⁸ N.a., “The Liturgical Music,” *AER* 31 no. 2 (1904) 178-181, here 180.

¹⁵⁹ Monaghan, “Life of Blessed Pius X,” 109.

¹⁶⁰ See Hayburn’s account at 235-6.

¹⁶¹ Rev. Benedict A. G. Ehmann, “Church Music,” in Episcopal Committee of The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, *A Symposium on the Life and Work of Pope Pius X* (Washington, D.C.: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1946) 204. People wanted to know “just what part De Santi had, if any, in the actual formulation of the law,” noted James A. Boylan, in “Roman Church Music Reform,” *AER* 66 (1922) 482. Though a “partisan” viewpoint, the role of Fr. DeSanti is most fully documented in Combe, *Restoration of Gregorian Chant*, esp. 220-241; 248-258.

¹⁶² Stockley, “Pope and the Reform” Part I, 279.

considerations should determine musical matters.”¹⁶³ Americans *liked* the music which was now newly “forbidden.” *Custom* mitigated against the new law:

We have always sung as at present; these tunes have been sung by our fathers before us, and we like them; we have always played the organ during Advent and Lent; we have always listened to the singing of arias by a solo voice, usually female; we have always omitted the Proper of the Day at High Mass; – all these things and others of like nature are a custom of long standing, and we will not tolerate any newfangled notions in this church.¹⁶⁴

Particularly grating to Americans was the direction about women, that “part of the Pope's Instruction which evidently commanded the most attention,” stimulating “a feeling of dislike for this regulation as well as opposition to it.”¹⁶⁵ Not willing for change (nor certainly challenge) in all these areas, many Americans simply turned a cold shoulder, claiming “It is impossible to carry out the Pope’s directions.”¹⁶⁶

Misunderstanding too played a role in the life of *TLS* from the beginning. “Various were the misunderstandings and misinterpretations to which the document gave rise,” cites a seminary musician in the 1920’s.¹⁶⁷ He explains,

Some promptly concluded that liturgical music was henceforth to be exclusively Gregorian; . . . it was not strange that the prospect should arouse no enthusiasm. To others the pontifical decree conveyed only the one thought, that women had no place in a liturgical choir; . . . There were even some who saw in the new legislation nothing more

¹⁶³ Manzetti, “The ‘Motu Proprio’ on Church Music,” 6.

¹⁶⁴ Justine B. Ward, “Twenty-five Years: Authority and Obedience,” *AER* 78 (1928) 503-510, here 506. The discussion in this paragraph follows the points raised by Ward in this article.

¹⁶⁵ “The Liturgical Music,” (*AER* 31) 181.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁶⁷ Boylan, “Church Music Reform,” 475.

than an effort to foist on an enlightened public the French pronunciation of Latin.¹⁶⁸

Further on we will see numerous facets of the misunderstandings of *TLS*, highly ironic in view of the fact that Pius' stated intention in the document was to be explicitly clear. It is perhaps because of the "radical" nature of the proposal for *actuosa participatio*, and because of the muted way (so suggested here) that it is treated in *TLS*, that opportunities for misinterpretation, skewed emphasis, or a yawning indifference arose. Pius himself took the opportunity on numerous occasions, both in writing and at public gatherings, to re-confirm his cherished but as yet apparently uncommunicated, and certainly unrealized, vision.¹⁶⁹ Diekmann cites (among many others) his statement to the French Bishops gathered in Rome in 1909, that "My one great desire is that during the sacred functions all the faithful together sing with a loud voice the melodies of the Liturgy and the sacred hymns."¹⁷⁰ Yet as late as 1946 Benedict Ehmann concluded that "Even now, after more than forty years, there is still a majority impression that [*TLS*] is a minor document engaged with musical accessories."¹⁷¹ Emblematically, an American bishop hosted a fiftieth anniversary celebration of the *motu proprio* with a performance by the choir of Gounod's *Mass in Honor of St. Cecilia*.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 475.

¹⁶⁹ Godfrey Diekmann catalogues numerous instances in "Lay Participation in the Liturgy of the Church," in *Symposium on the Life and Work*, 137-156.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷¹ "Church Music," in *Symposium on the Life and Work*, 197.

Indifference

The reception most commonly afforded the *motu proprio*, however, was simply dismissiveness. One organist noted the common question, “Why all this agitation and discussion over the matter of Church Music Reform?,” while stating “the greatest hindrance and discouragement that we have to contend with, is the general lack of any real interest in church music on the part of many pastors and congregations.”¹⁷² *The Catholic Choirmaster*, shortly after Pius X's death, agreed:

Many of the clergy when asked why they do not take any interest in the subject respond, “Why nobody seems to care, so long as the rectors do not care why should I bother. The matter will soon die out anyway.” The Sisterhoods (more is the pity) sing as they did before the promulgation of the “*motu proprio*.” The majority know very little about the reform movement and care less.¹⁷³

And scolding Catholic musicians to “stop kidding ourselves,” Francis Brunner, CSsR, exhorts as late as 1951, “Certainly the liturgical revival has less to fear from the enthusiasm of some few cranks than from the general apathy of the multitude of indifferent.”

Certainly the work of improving sacred music suffers not from the ardent zeal of faddists but from the cold indifference of the proponents of *laissez-faire*. Those who know nothing and care less – they are the worst enemies of any reform movement. With consummate effrontery they label the whole thing a pedantic whim, a passing fancy, an antiquarian idiotism!¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Walter N. Waters, “The Choir and the Choirmaster,” CAT 19 (1933) 144-146, here 144.

¹⁷³ “A Letter from a prominent Choirmaster in a large city in the Middle West,” CAT 1 no. 3 (October 1915) 21.

¹⁷⁴ Francis A. Brunner, “Let’s Stop Kidding Ourselves,” CEC 78 no. 4 (May-June 1951) 171.

A deeper form of indifference related to American attitudes toward papal authority. “We are well aware,” intoned Pius XI in *Divini cultus sanctitatem*, “that some have stated repeatedly that they are not bound by these laws which were so solemnly promulgated . . .”¹⁷⁵ One strain of American resistance looked upon the Vatican as, “after all, nothing but a sacristy, with the peculiar mental outlook of the sacristy.”¹⁷⁶ The question of whether the *motu proprio* was binding in conscience was itself “clouded not so much by disagreement among a few theologians as by the supreme indifference of the majority of them.”¹⁷⁷ Because *TLS* had stipulated no penalties, “had no teeth,” the reaction was that “Laymen, organists and choirmasters particularly, surely need not bother about a mere request or timid suggestion concerning such an abstract matter as Aesthetics.”¹⁷⁸ Justine Ward among others scolded the American church in print for its disobedient stance toward Rome, pointedly asking “If an evil custom [such as current church music practices] may be maintained in defiance of the formal ruling of the Holy See, then what is the use of the Church’s laws?”¹⁷⁹ However, reports filtered in from the “field” that waving the authority stick while trying to implement *TLS* was not a productive procedure: “the modern Catholic cares little for the wishes of the Holy Father, and still less for anyone

¹⁷⁵ Acta PII PP. XI, Apostolic Constitution *Divini cultus sanctitatem*. English translation given in AER 80 no. 5 (1929) 501-509, here 503.

¹⁷⁶ Richard Bagot, n.t., in *The Nineteenth Century* (June 1946), quoted in Ehmann, “Church Music,” 209.

¹⁷⁷ Hume, 8.

¹⁷⁸ Editor, n.t., CAT 2 no. 3 (1916)13.

¹⁷⁹ Ward, “Twenty-five Years,” 507.

else's recommendations . . . The days when people were 'trained' to do certain things and just because the pastor said so in a blistering sermon are gone forever."¹⁸⁰

Active Opposition

Many in the American church looked upon those actively promoting the *motu proprio* as extremists, sometimes dangerously so. "Pastors laugh and comment freely on the fanatical zeal of extreme Liturgists," one writer in *Novena Notes* warned,

but . . . isn't it about time these same rise in a body and protest against the definite conspiracy to destroy what so many of their parishioners hold sacred? . . . There is not much hope for the "extremists," as from experience we have found they are a breed set apart and without knowledge of people and feelings. We wonder how they are allowed free rein in seminaries and so easily gain the ear of Chancery offices.¹⁸¹

The plan of these "extremists" for bringing in Gregorian chant was viewed as disruptive, a "rush to extremes, from Irish melodies or Italian operas all of a leap to St. Gregory . . . Now this is a source of great difficulties."¹⁸² As late as 1950, no less a figure than Francis Schmitt disparagingly referred to "the congregational singing *clique*" who were trying "to carry their sagging point."¹⁸³ Other highly-placed musicians refused to endorse the Gregorian priority:

¹⁸⁰ Lucien Duesing, O.S.B., "Revolution in a Country Parish (With apologies to Abbe Michonneau)" Part 1, CEC 78 no. 2 (January-February 1951) 71; Part 2, CEC 78 no. 3 (March-April 1951) 127.

¹⁸¹ Hume, 11-12.

¹⁸² Stockley, "The Mind of Rome," 432.

¹⁸³ Rev. Francis Schmitt, "The Boy Choir and Its Repertoire," CEC 77 no. 3 (Mar-April 1950) 105-108, here 108, italics added. The initiative for congregational singing in England similarly created polarization, "hostile camps" of "liturgists" versus "the popular devotion men." See Lancelot C. Sheppard, "The Liturgical Movement in England," OFW 13 (1939), 509-512, here 510.

While I love the chant and have constantly been studying it, I must admit from practical experience that it will never supersede the figured music in our churches, nor do I feel that it should. It is a music of the early age, to be cherished for its many beauties . . . and while it will flourish here and there for a while, like an exotic plant, it will never again hold the place that it did in its own day.¹⁸⁴

Further, the idea of expecting people to actually *sing* chant was considered an out-and-out absurdity:

“Hopeless!” retort the hard-boiled multitude of pastors and organists. *Non in aeternum*. It will take an eternity to accustom the modern taste to this monotonous, wandering, wailing, empty-sounding music: without measure, or tune, or harmonization. Against all your fine historical and esthetic arguments there stand three overwhelming facts:

1. *The choir tried it*; and rebelled. Mrs. McScream, who has sung Lambillotte’s Mass for twenty years, developed tonsillitis after trying to sing the whole of the Gregorian *Dies Irae* at a funeral.
2. *I have heard it*; and never want to hear it again. It is depressing. The people want something to cheer them up. Tell that to Mrs. Van Clef the next time she talks about raising a fund to provide free Graduales in the pews.
3. And, *as for the people singing it*: why, they can’t even keep together singing “the Tantum ergo.”¹⁸⁵

It was an anonymous *Clericus* who aptly summed up the American response to *TLS*: “every one has been choosing his own tempo in the matter, and *adagio* was never more popular.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ J. Alfred Schehl, Letter to the Editor, *CAT* 2 no. 3 (July 1916) 18.

¹⁸⁵ John LaFarge, S.J., “The New Encyclical on Church Music,” *America* 40 no. 25 (March 30, 1929) 592. *Italics original*.

¹⁸⁶ “Clericus,” “Where are we?” 430.

3.2.2.2 The Clergy

“This agony at the altar”

Sunt etiam plerique Clerici vel Monachi, qui artem Musicae jucundissimae neque sciunt, neque scire volunt, et quod gravius est, scientes refutant et abhorrent.

Guido of Arezzo, 11th c.¹⁸⁷

How many times does a priest give verbal assent to some musical objective, particularly the aim of congregational participation in holy Mass, and then add matter-of-factly, “Of course, I don’t know anything about music myself.” He is usually quite right. He cannot sing, read the notes, stay on pitch, or give any good reasons why one piece is better than another. He and thousands more are ignorant not only of liturgical chant but of all musical knowledge. . . . [W]e are a generation of onlookers, not participants; looking at sermons and listening to music, not making it, is a national habit.¹⁸⁸

The fact that the above assessment was written in 1952 really tells enough about the fate of the *motu proprio* in this half-century; what follows can be considered simply detail. The cooperation of many would be needed to make *TLS* succeed, but it was the pastors who had the power to direct change through the activities of musicians and people, and time and again the clergy were seen to be the missing vital cog. One astonished onlooker from the 1950’s, a convert, not only marveled at the sheer *power* of Catholic pastors, but that it could be used non-beneficially: “. . . [O]n the subject of Church music one question above all continues to haunt me: *Why is it that in so many parishes today the music is regulated, not according to the legislation of the Church, but strictly according to the whim of the pastor?*”¹⁸⁹ And

¹⁸⁷ “There are even many priests and even monks who neither know, nor even want to know, the most wonderful art of music; and what is worse, the ones who do know music reject and abhor it.” Frater Kenneth E. Beznoska, M.S.C., “An Epistle to Torculus,” *CEC* 78 no. 6 (Sept - Oct 1951) 248-250, here 250 (translation mine).

¹⁸⁸ Joseph T. Nolan, “Song at the Altar,” *CAT* 38 (1952) 9.

¹⁸⁹ Hume, 7. Italics added.

the power of that whim, for the priest who “doesn’t know anything about music myself,” spelled trouble for the *motu proprio*:

If he grew up with the notion that few things in the world could matter less than music, then the mere fact of suddenly being made a pastor is hardly going to change his feelings on the subject, *just because a couple of papal documents have been written about it.*¹⁹⁰

The general lack of musical background among priests seemed widely acknowledged, and the root of this “clerical problem” was routinely acknowledged to be in the seminaries. There was no shortage of papal attention to this critical link: at the beginning of our period, Pius X himself in *TLS* directs the training of seminarians; near the end of our period, Pius XII states anew that “*Principally to be considered . . . is the fact that the priest as teacher of Christian people should have proper artistic formation from his earliest seminary days.*”¹⁹¹ At least in the early going, however, the attitude of “young scholastics and priests” toward things musical and especially Gregorian chant was “jeers and sneers”:¹⁹²

[T]he tacit understanding amongst all seems to be that while the details of ceremonial should be carefully attended to, any kind of rendition of plain chant will suffice. The man who tries to sing the melody as indicated – in the missal, even – is doing the chant “honor overmuch.” . . . The seminarian who is in sacred orders will wax warm in defence of the exact degree of profundity in his reverences to the

¹⁹⁰ Hume 13. Italics added.

¹⁹¹ Pius XII, letter to Guiseppi Cardinal Pizzardo commemorating the golden anniversary of *TLS*. Quoted in CEC 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 73. Italics added. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* also stressed that “Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes . . .” (VI.115).

¹⁹² Stockley, “The Mind of Rome,” 429.

celebrant, and will make merry sport of his weirdly original *Ite missa est*.¹⁹³

The Catholic Choirmaster acknowledged as of 1915 that music in most American seminaries was still a “dead letter.”¹⁹⁴ Many clergy, even having “passed through the seminary course of so-called training, . . . know no more about it than if they had never heard a note in their lives,” stated one seminary professor. “Hence, they dread the *missa cantata*, and the people who assist at it regret that they fear it not sufficiently not to inflict their attempt at singing on a long-suffering public.”¹⁹⁵

Once ordained and in parish ministry, clergy adopted a variety of defensive postures toward music. Many who even took the trouble to learn about *TLS* were so bewildered by its “high ideals” that they simply assumed they were not applicable in their individual situations.¹⁹⁶ For others, chant continued to be a joke, a matter of “inexcusable levity” in their “weirdly original” renderings, complete with “painful shouting, nasal effects, and unauthorized flourishes.”¹⁹⁷ For others, though, what was a joke in seminary now became a fearsome public matter of standing at the altar, “alone, desperately alone” in

¹⁹³ H. T. Henry, “Music in the Seminary,” *AER* 6 (1892) 351-62, here 357-8.

¹⁹⁴ G. Edward Stubbs, n.t., reprinted from *The New Music Review* (n.d.), *CAT* 1.3 (October 1915) 12.

¹⁹⁵ Camillus P. Maes (Bishop of Covington, KY), “The Theological Seminary,” *AER* 14 no. 5 (May 1896) 435-445, here 441.

¹⁹⁶ See “Clericus,” “Where are we?” 427.

¹⁹⁷ “Dom Porrectus Flexus” thus lampoons these types: “Why, some even alter the tones at pleasure; some make no distinction between long or short notes. Their voices lack a character of devotional tenderness, and they overlook the intrinsic worth of the Chant itself, dragging it on lazily as if it were a stone of great weight. Now they rush on in unbecoming haste, and again they make Chant vulgar by painful shouting, imperfect pronunciation and in many cases faulty mannerisms have been adopted, e.g. affected tones of voice, nasal effects, long drawling of final syllables and little grace notes and unauthorized flourishes. Think of it!” Beznoska, M.S.C., “Epistle to Torculus” 250.

song; and some tragically then went so far as to cancel sung Masses.¹⁹⁸ Help was offered to the unmusical,¹⁹⁹ but there was an embarrassed *detente* between unmusical clergy and their sung obligations, leading many to avoid the whole issue of their singing or its improvement. Unknowingly perhaps but inevitably, that avoidance deprived the worshipping community of its most potent exemplar: “A priest who can sing well can properly edify his people. But all the more – *he can help them to sing.*”²⁰⁰

Failure of Leadership. The result of the clergy not being carefully grounded in music had further detrimental effects at the parish level. Very commonly, musicians were treated off-handedly by clergy, looked down on as second-class citizens, “*a necessary evil . . . [who] should be considered as merely a side issue and that the salary received, rather in the nature of a bonus.*”

“Oh, the choir will get along in some way,” a pastor will remark, – “little Mary has played for the Sodality and the children's Mass, and soon will be able to play the 'big organ' for High Mass.” And the momentous question is disposed of in this light-hearted manner.²⁰¹

At the other end of the spectrum, there was fear of the musicians and their “arcane” arts: “The choir is the Devil’s end of the church and must be kept rigidly under control.”²⁰² Similarly, “As a new priest I was solemnly warned more than once never to set foot in the

¹⁹⁸ “Our new pastor is not musical, so we do not have a High Mass any more. I think that is a mistake, don’t you?” one survey respondent submitted. Hume, 12.

¹⁹⁹ In occasional periodical entries – e.g., John P. Ashton, “Of Course You Can Sing!” AER 128 (1953) 384 – 88; also Nolan, “Song at the Altar,” 9 – 10.

²⁰⁰ Nolan, “Song at the Altar,” 10.

²⁰¹ Editor, n.t., CAT 2 no. 3 (July 1916) 10.

²⁰² Henry D. Buchanan, “Here Comes the Bride,” AER 113 (1945) 444.

choir loft, one pastor assuring me that he had never climbed the steps to the choir loft even when the church was empty.”²⁰³ Clergy were moreover apt to be swayed by laity:

Rubrics and statutes are of course explicit, but rubrics and statutes are not to be observed too rigorously where advanced and influential Catholics are concerned. People, to use the expression of a veteran pastor, must be allowed their tin-god, and hunting after bother is hardly common sense. If Father A. permits it, why should Father B. arouse a hornet’s nest to carry out regulations that were seemingly made to be broken. And so on *ad nauseam*.²⁰⁴

In this sense, there was a failure of necessary leadership on the part of parish clergy, one that did not escape notice among clergy themselves. “[I]t is a curious thing,” a New York Monsignor addressed a National Eucharistic Convention, “to see the clergy, supposedly the leaders of the people, sheepishly being led by the people,” especially when

contemporary taste has been vitiated by current forms of music, the savagery of jazz, the sentimentalism of crooning, the sensualism of romantic song and the frivolity of popular ballads. It is and will be an arduous and tedious task, but if music is to fulfill the hopes of our Pontiffs, *it is the business of the clergy to educate a corrupted and perverted musical taste* . . .²⁰⁵

Clergy were exhorted in print to take a strong stand:

If the priests of each diocese would declare *una voce* that after a definite period of time all choirmasters who wish to retain their charges must be ready to sign contracts binding them to introduce the reforms, our musicians would lose no time in discovering to themselves the arcana of this department of the musical profession. Concerted action is needed.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Buchanan, “Here Comes the Bride,” 445.

²⁰⁴ “Sacerdos,” “The Singing at Funerals,” AER 29 (1903) 410.

²⁰⁵ Rt. Rev. Joseph H. McMahon, “The Liturgy – Inspiration of Catholic Action,” CAT 23 (1937) 112-119, here 114. Italics added.

²⁰⁶ “Clericus,” “Where are we?” 434.

Fr. Emmet Kelly addressed the NCMEA with the hard line: “The Church has made her position clear. It is a mystery to me why there should be so much apparent confusion between the altar and the choir loft.”²⁰⁷ Occasionally, however, leadership failed by being too coercive:

[E]very once in awhile, the people were told to “appreciate the Mass, and what these young men [Benedictine missionaries of congregational singing] are doing for you; sing and do what the Pope wants you to do, or get out of church.” Such admonitions did not improve the situation. In fact we noticed a decided retrogression after each sermon of this type.²⁰⁸

But it seemed that more often clergy sat on their hands. Undoubtedly the manifold strains of parish administration and finance took their toll, and the reluctance of some clergy in fact stemmed from a perceptive realization (or instinctual sense) of just how much effort the *motu proprio* would require.²⁰⁹ But lost in the balance was the sense of liturgy as being of primary importance in the scheme of things, the “indispensable fount.” “It is not that anyone doubts the binding force of the encyclical,” wrote one observer in 1906. “All are agreed upon that now, but a great many priests seem to be waiting for ‘something to turn up.’ Just what this ‘something’ [is] is not quite clear. Almost everybody is loath to make a personal start. Initiative is lacking.”²¹⁰

Opposition (passive and active). The impact of clergy on the fate of the *motu proprio* also took the form of real opposition. Passive opposition took the form of not supporting

²⁰⁷ Gregory Ellwood, “The NCMEA Convention in Cleveland,” *CEC* 78 no. 4 (May-June 1951) 161-164, here 164.

²⁰⁸ Duesing, O.S.B., “Revolution” Part 2, 92.

²⁰⁹ See “The Recent American Congress for the Reform of Church Music,” *AER* 63 (1920) 121.

²¹⁰ “Clericus,” “Where are we?” 433.

musicians who were trying to implement *TLS*. Simple examples of such support actually had to be spelled out and promoted in journal articles,²¹¹ such things as frequent attendance at choir rehearsal, speaking an encouraging (and recruiting) word to adult and child singers alike, expressing gratitude in church announcements, etc. “A little interest on the part of the pastor could solve the matter,” offered Justine Ward among many others.²¹² Sadly, too, some musicians trying to “do the right thing” were *actively* opposed by clergy, forcing public pleas of “the pastor must help; learn to help: be forced to help.”²¹³ A nun organist wept when her pastor insisted she play “Good Night Sweet Jesus” on the opening night of a Novena, over her objections.²¹⁴ Sisters were said to resort to “tactful” ways of getting “Father” to stop ignoring the Propers at mass,²¹⁵ and a pastor testified about the “struggle to get the Proper sung or chanted, but chiefly because of the *opposition of priests!* I have known one pastor to stand in the pulpit and *publicly express contempt* for his assistant who was following the rubrics.”²¹⁶ A bishop sent word ahead to a school on his annual visit, that “he could do without ‘the lugubrious chant’ this year” at the Solemn Pontifical Mass.²¹⁷

²¹¹ See, e.g., “A Catholic Organist” [anon.], “Our Pastors and the Music in Our Churches,” *AER* 72 (1925) 634-7; Brunner, “Let’s Stop Kidding,” 171.

²¹² Ward, “Twenty-five Years,” 510.

²¹³ See e.g. Letter to the Editor from “Middle West Choirmaster,” *CAT* 1 no. 3 (Oct 1915) 20-21.

²¹⁴ Hume, 12.

²¹⁵ Rev. Richard Ginder, “Our Devoted Sisters,” *CAT* 38 (1952) 2.

²¹⁶ “Pastor” [anon.], “The Instruction on Church Music,” *AER* 85 (1931) 83. Italics added.

²¹⁷ Hume, 154.

Summary. Paul Hume provides a valuable summary of problems with clergy, music and the *motu proprio* in his 1956 book, based on a national survey of almost 500 respondents.²¹⁸ Though the summary represents the musicians' point of view, it is broadly reflective of American attitudes and the American "scene." The five largest problems for a Catholic church musician in the mid-1950's were said to be:

1. The feeling that he is working without the full support or interest of the authorities who employ him.
2. The feeling that the precepts of the *motu proprio*, on which he would like to base his entire *modus operandi*, are not regarded by his pastor or bishop as actually binding upon him or them.
3. The knowledge that in many places the labor of popes, scholars and musicians in restoring the chant to its proper place in the liturgy is absolutely without fruit because of the prejudices of a few "key" men.
4. The feeling that hymnody had sunk to a point beyond reclaim because no one with real authority had taken a stand on the dignity and artistic integrity necessary to hymns.
5. The knowledge that no matter how hard the individual parish or diocese worked at its music, no widespread improvement could come about without a definitive program of education for the clergy of the future.

3.2.2.3 Musicians

"A hard place to control"²¹⁹

But are pastors to blame as much as those who manage priest and people; that is, the irresponsible laity of organ-bench and choir? The *fons et origo mali* is their independence from priestly control. And why

²¹⁸ Ibid., 153-4.

²¹⁹ J. H. Zabel, "The 'Motu Proprio' and the Priests' Eucharistic League," *Emmanuel* 13 no. 1 (January 1907) 9.

are they independent? Are the priests in a position to guide them? If they are not, – why?²²⁰

While the fate of *Tra le sollecitudini* was no doubt heavily influenced by the clergy, its implementation lay more directly in the hands of musicians – who by frequent account operated largely independently anyway, and likewise merited their own share of blistering critique. There was of course a wide spectrum of training, outlook, and practical approach among the large number of Catholic musicians, but several distinct trends can be outlined which had critical impact on the life of *TLS*.

Volunteer Army. Among church musicians generally there was a gulf between those with conservatory-level training and the large army of amateurs, often poorly paid or volunteers. Though often the only resort for rural or financially strapped parishes, the wide reliance on untrained musicians generally relegated music to secondary status, certainly not capable of mounting the effort needed for the daunting project of the *motu proprio*. “The practice of hiring just anyone who has had a few piano lessons, and then expecting a combination of personal leadership, musical talent, and advanced liturgical education to emerge for the benefit of an entire parish, is completely indefensible. Don’t expect a learner to be a teacher,” bristled one observer as late as 1950.²²¹ Rev. Francis

²²⁰ Stockley, “The Mind of Rome,” 432.

²²¹ Maureen O’Shea, “Youth and Sacred Music,” *CEC* 77 no. 5 (July-Aug 1950) 224-5, here 224. A fuller anecdotal account of “Musical Illiteracy” follows this same article:

“How many times does it happen that the leadership of a small choir is entrusted to an utterly unqualified person? Poor pastors! Heaven knows they have their problems; and a hard enough time collecting enough money for all running parochial expenses. And when the question of a choir comes up, naturally the decision must go to a *volunteer* choir, since there is no money for it. And as to a director, well, there is Mrs. Rickenbaum. She can play a hymn on the piano, she even teaches a few little beginners on the piano for pin-money, so she will do – especially since she is a good Catholic, and will consent to do the work for next to nothing. . . . Unfortunately, experience has shown that, of the 1000 Mrs. Rickenbaums who are

Schmitt, the director of the Boys Town choir for decades, especially derided the grooming by pastors of almost exclusively young female organists in this manner, to the detriment of future male musicians. “Of course, the whole business is a good deal cheaper this way, and if that’s a portion of the point . . . ,” adds the acid-tongued Schmitt,²²² while the Priests’ Eucharistic League observed that “We may eradicate unliturgical music. All very well. But we must still have first-class musicians, if we would have first-class music. If we get music cheap, the chances are that we are getting cheap music.”²²³ The issue of adequate compensation was thus a frequent topic through this period, seen as an obvious but oft-neglected *sine qua non* for musicians (present and future) to be hired, rewarded, and attracted to church music as a profession.²²⁴ It was a commonly stated concern of Pius X that the *proper performance* of chant was everything: if *TLS* was to succeed, Gregorian chant and classic polyphony needed to be showcased in their best light – and poor performances

thus honored, not more than one or two will feel, on accepting the position, that it entails also a sacred obligation: that of acquiring the various skills and the knowledge necessary to fulfill these new duties.” Camil Van Hulse, “Communications: More about Musical Illiteracy,” *CEC* 77 no. 5 (July-Aug 1950) 227-229, here 227.

²²² Rev. Francis Schmitt, “Boy-choir and Its Repertoire,” *CEC* 77 no. 3 (Mar-April 1950) 105-108, here 106.

²²³ D. J. Connor, “Religious and Secular Ideals in Music,” *Emmanuel* 32 (1926) 18. A very shallow understanding of the necessary music training is evidenced in the advice of “Old Timer,” who suggests “pick out a good and bright boy and have him go through an elementary piano or organ method. . . In a very short time the playing and singing of the boy will prove a solid foundation whereon to build a choir. At this stage other boys may join him. All can practice once a week, and, behold, you have a sanctuary choir!” *AER* 35 (1906), 428-9. A modern plea suggests a perduring concern: Robert Hovda, “There’s Nothing Like a Professional Musician,” (“Amen Corner” from *Worship*, September 1986) in *The Amen Corner*, ed. John F. Baldovin, SJ (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994) Chapter 31 (234-40).

²²⁴ See, e.g. W[illiam] A[rthur] R[eilly] (interim editor), “More on Adequate Salaries,” *CEC* 78 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1950) 4-5. This article concludes in the terminology of the labor movement: “Shall we wait for the CIO or the AF of L to form a union? Or shall we voluntarily practice what we preach – A LIVING WAGE FOR THE LABORER.”

by underpaid non-professionals spelled doom for an effective presentation of Gregorian chant, let alone classic polyphony. As Schmitt again sharply observed,

If, as Father Ginder said, Cesar Franck's *Panis Angelicus* needs a twenty-five year rest, it is not Cesar Franck's fault. For the test of great music is that it grows and does not deteriorate with repetition, *if it is done well*. . . . And one sometimes suspects that the entire body of plain chant will need a longer rest than either *Panis Angelicus* or the Blue Danube: but only because of the travesty a whole generation has heard.²²⁵

Cecilian Heirs. But on the other side of the gulf, in the hands of professional and competent musicians, *TLS* also suffered a turbulent journey. Many trained church musicians, especially those influenced by the earlier Cecilian movement, simply saw the *motu proprio* as confirmation of their prior ideals about "good music," and continued ever more confidently with "business as usual."²²⁶ They railed at the "debased" music so common in churches, sniffing that "any musically educated parishioners carefully avoid attending services where music is attempted, lest they sin grievously against charity."²²⁷ Typically they described the role of music as "safeguarding of the dignity and purity of divine worship," and in view of the parallel sentiments in *TLS*, some of their complaints were not off-base:

²²⁵ Schmitt, "Boy-Choir and Its Repertoire," 107.

²²⁶ Walter Waters describes the flamboyant *status quo*:

"[The Music director] is not assisting at a Sunday morning concert, to display fine singers and stun his listeners with wonderful dramatic climaxes, strong contrasts and top notes. The music proper to this holy occasion must necessarily be entirely subservient to the words, and humbly aim at emphasizing and bringing out *the meaning of the liturgy* at all times. It must focus attention of the listeners upon the altar, and not upon itself. This lofty principle rules out a large percentage of the usual music heard at high mass." In "Choir and Choirmaster," 145.

²²⁷ Waters, "Choir and Choirmaster," 144.

In one of San Francisco's down-town churches we will probably hear this year as before, on the feast of the Holy Family, "*Home, Sweet Home*," on Ash-Wednesday we must bear up under Chopin's "*Funeral March*" as just in the last week at a noon-day Mass we listened to the strains of "*Flow, gently sweet, Afton*."²²⁸

With an eye over the shoulder (perhaps to Anglicans and Lutherans), Catholic Cecilians wondered "Why must we, who have the reality of the one true religion, be compelled to use such poor equipment; crude untrained singers and cheap jiggy music . . . while some neighboring non-Catholic church succeeds in maintaining a high-grade service of real worship music, conducive to the deepest devotion, dignified and scholarly?"²²⁹

Thus the goal at Sunday's parish *missa cantata* continued to be "fine performances of liturgical music." But strangely, a large majority of trained musicians seem to have considered "liturgical music" to mean a kind of reformed *style*, sung by the choir, having nothing whatsoever to do with congregational singing. This *style* was the basis of the White List of the Society of St. Gregory, which launched a national fetish over "approved" music, especially mass settings.

It is indeed encouraging to lovers of true Catholic music, to have at last an organization [the Society of St. Gregory in America] whose aim is to promote the grand old chant of Mother Church and the singing of Polyphonic music that is devoid of irreverence and theatricalism. When contrasted in the light of our approved music of today, the old masses in the so-called "florid" style, seem tawdry and utterly lacking

²²⁸ Mae Lynch, Letter to the Editor ("Agrees With Father Boyle") CAT 20 (1934) 37. The matter of wedding music, especially the march from *Lohengrin*, was a particular thorn in the side of Cecilians and frequent topic in the literature. See for example Buchanan, "Here Comes the Bride," 444-6.

²²⁹ Waters, "Choir and Choirmaster," 145.

in the spirit of devotion which Catholic church music should inspire.²³⁰

Or note these criteria for Mass ordinaries, and the invocation of Pius X:

In determining whether a setting of the Ordinary of the Mass is or is not suitable for liturgical use the question is not, *has the composer repeated the intonation of the celebrant in the Gloria or Credo?* Nor is it, *how long is this or that movement?* The important question is, *does the composition faithfully mirror the text, is it worthy of divine worship as a setting forth of the spirit of prayer?*; to use the words of Pius X, is it *holy*, is it *true art*, will it exert a *large appeal*?²³¹

Laudable goals all – but nothing about the congregation!

The glaring anomaly was that musicians – generally the ones with the most training – simply allowed choirs continually to usurp the role of the people, outlined by Pius X himself, in singing the Ordinary.²³² Without doubt this non-compliance on the part of parish musicians was a key to the non-reception of TLS. It was the practice of the time, both in Europe and the US (albeit one often condemned), to publish programs of Mass music in the various newspapers and journals, and one can readily see in these the continued focus of choirs on providing polyphonic versions of the mass ordinaries, to the exclusion of Gregorian settings (not to say the congregation), and little attention to Gregorian propers.²³³ Pius X is said to have commented dryly on seeing just such a printed

²³⁰ Humbert Pietro Pagani, Letter to the Editor, CAT 1 no. 3 (Oct 1915) 21. On Cecilian style, see Silverberg, 439-442.

²³¹ Alastair Guinan, “The Catholic Choir,” AER 94 (1936) 257. Italics original.

²³² Even a musician well-versed in the *motu proprio* seems to consider the congregation secondary to the choir: “But small parishes that simply cannot seem to maintain a decent-sounding choir should give a lot of thought to launching an all-out program of congregational singing,” writes Paul Hume, 87.

²³³ See, among many, the “Programmes” in CAT 1 no. 2 (June 1915) 26-29; or CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 20-23.

program.²³⁴ Even at conventions for “liturgical music,” the music chosen for demonstration is remarkable for its lack of attention to congregational singing.²³⁵ In *Orate Fratres* a priest warns that “Variety in music at Mass must come from the singing of the proper by the trained liturgical choir; and the choir must not be allowed to usurp the parts of the ordinary which belong to the people,”²³⁶ and as late as 1945 Rev. H.A. Reinhold is still pleading in the pages of *The Catholic Choirmaster* “to give the people a part in what rightfully belongs to them – *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei* and all the Responses . . . [T]hese parts belong to the people ordinarily, and . . . there is no hope for better participation at Mass until they are given back to them.”²³⁷ Sadly, the practice of choirs usurping the Ordinary is abetted both by clergy and publishers.²³⁸ And in a further

²³⁴ “At that moment the Holy Father stood up and fingered through a pile of papers on his desk, until he found a newspaper clipping which he pulled out and showed to me, with the remark that it was from Canada. It was a list of musical works performed in different churches of Montreal on Easter. There were pieces for orchestra, Masses in all the keys, with solos and duets composed with the virtuosity of the theatre carried over into the church.

Pointing with each finger to these programs, Pius X said with an ironic smile:

‘Do they do this kind of music in Paris, too?’

All I could say was, ‘Alas, Holy Father, alas!’” In Ehmann, “Church Music,” 210.

²³⁵ For a typical example, see Rev. Elmer F. Pfeil, “Workshop in Milwaukee,” CEC 80 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1952) 33-35.

²³⁶ Rev. Maurice C. Herman, “Homely Hints On . . .” OFW 24 no. 6 (May 1950) 267-270, here 269.

²³⁷ Rev. H. A. Reinhold, “Liturgical Discernment,” CAT 31 (1945) 52.

²³⁸ For clergy: “This is the way the Indianapolis Cathedral choir has been able to produce the very best approved masses during the last seven or eight years. We are never so happy as when one of our priests just returning from Europe, hands us a number of new approved masses to try out.” (Pagani, Letter to the Editor, CAT 1 no. 3, 21-22.) For publishers: Scholarly editions of early polyphonic music – the Classical polyphony called for by Pius X – were only largely available in Europe, and were very expensive to obtain in the US. In any event, the demand was low for American publishers: “As regards the printing of good editions in this country, the demand has been too irregular to warrant our doing so. Until now Gregorian chant has been sung only by way of exception, conditions in average churches throughout the country, large and small, unfortunately demanding the selection of other music.” (Ermin Vitry, “Reflections on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the *Motu Proprio* on Church Music,” OFW 2 no. 8 [June 10, 1928] 240-245, here 244). That “other music” usually consisted of second-rate Cecilian compositions: “We find published at present

twisting of *TLS*, “so often we find that, while the choir monopolizes the congregational parts, it neglects to sing its own parts”²³⁹: the Propers, especially the Gregorian originals, were ignored. In his landmark 1933 letter in *America*, “Shall the People Sing at Mass?,” Fr. John LaFarge remarks

As for our more exquisite gatherings, if one quarter of the energy that the choirs put into preparing elaborate musical settings for the Common of the Mass (which the people themselves are supposed to sing) were expended on learning the figured setting of the Proper, we should have perfect achievement.²⁴⁰

Cecilian Airs. To make matters worse, the Masses and other music written in the so-called “approved” or “liturgical” style were in retrospect artistically lacking, devoid of “inspiration and originality.”²⁴¹ Thomas Day gives an apt summary:

[I]n the sixty years after the appearance of the *motu proprio* in 1903, the relatively few useful liturgical works by the best composers were lost in a flood of pieces by fourth-rate composers. Utterly without style or charm, these inferior works nevertheless managed to dominate liturgical music in many areas, even to the point of replacing chant and Renaissance polyphony. *From about 1903 until the 1960’s, most church choirs in the United States sang relatively new music written by contemporary composers whose sole claim to respectability was their rigid interpretation of the motu proprio.*²⁴²

many hundreds of compositions by men who merely imitate the original style, yet most of the original masterpieces themselves are difficult to obtain.” (Clement A. Miller, “A Secular Approach to Gregorian Chant and Sacred Polyphony,” *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* 5 no. 5 [April 1953] 35).

²³⁹ Ehmann, “Music in the Liturgy,” *CAT* 33 (1947) 54.

²⁴⁰ *America*, 24 June 1933, 271. Sixteen years later LaFarge was still exhorting the cause of the faithful’s part at Mass in the pages of *America*: see “The Mass for the masses,” *America*, 15 January 1949, 400-402.

²⁴¹ Rev. Francis J. Guenther, S.J., “Church Music, a Neglected Liturgical Art,” *Liturgical Arts* 13 no. 1 (November 1944) 38.

²⁴² Day, “Twentieth-century church music: an elusive modernity,” 245-6. Italics added.

The lack of authentic artistry did not escape notice even at the time, as in the journal (of the Priests' Eucharistic League) *Emmanuel*:

To prohibit the objectionable is not enough. It is equally important that some positive direction should be given also. Music may be perfectly proper liturgically, and atrocious artistically. To eradicate operatic and frivolous Masses is good, but they should not be substituted by stiff, tiresome, uninspired Masses.²⁴³

This glut of masses in a presumed "liturgical style" had several deleterious effects, inimical to the stated intentions of *TLS*: not only were propers ignored and congregations deprived of their role in the Ordinary, but plainchant was crowded out as indeed was authentically modern composition.²⁴⁴ One is struck, moreover, in Mass programs, workshops and conferences by the frequent choice by choir directors of their own compositions; and even in an age when well-rounded musicians were expected to show ability in composition, one cannot escape the impression of a routine yielding to the temptation of self-display.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ D. J. Connor, "Religious and Secular Ideals in Music," *Emmanuel* 32 (1926) 18.

²⁴⁴ Francis Guenther, SJ, made a plea for creative, modern music as encouraged in the *motu proprio* in "Church Music, a Neglected Liturgical Art." (see n. 241). Among many other articles and editorials in *Liturgical Arts*, see: Leopold Arnaud, "The Living Tradition in Christian Art," vol. 9 no.3 (May 1941) 47-48; John Hennig, "Liturgy and Modern Art," vol. 13 no. 1 (Nov 1944) 2-4; Wladimir d'Ormesson, "The Contemporaneity of Sacred Art," vol. 25 (1956-7) 8-10, 19. See also Maurice Lavanoux, "Religious Art and Architecture Today," in Frederick R. McManus, ed., *The Revival of the Liturgy* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963) 152-162. The president of the Liturgical Arts Society thundered in 1957 that "Jacques Maritain has characterized that desire of many to return to some past age as actually a *blasphemy* against God's government of history." William Dunphy, Editorial, *Liturgical Arts* 25 no. 3 (May, 1957) 65.

²⁴⁵ Convention programs that feature works of the directors are too ubiquitous to cite. And though *The St. Gregory Hymnal and Catholic Choir Book* (Philadelphia: St. Gregory Guild, 1940) provided a real service to Catholic liturgical needs for many years (not least for its ready availability), it too demonstrated an apparently irresistible opportunity for its editor, Nicola A. Montani, to showcase many of his own compositions.

Some Cecilian composers had a stunningly distorted view of their own artistic worth: "The operatic masses of Mozart, Haydn, Weber, Giozsa and numerous other composers, can no longer compare in tonal beauty, devotional art, and intrinsic musical worth with the approved masses of Perosi, Stehl, Battazzo, Mitterer, Filke and Gruber. . . . [N]o Catholic singer will ever be content to return to the old masses. They are shelved forever." Pagani, Letter to the Editor of *CAT*. A letter in *CAT* in 1934, "In Praise of a New

Such display of course did not escape notice, one priest commenting that “Musicians need to be ruled with a firm hand in church, for it is apparently the fixed idea of most organists that the Mass is merely a handy way of gathering together an audience for the choir.”²⁴⁶ “For many organists,” as well, “unfortunately divine services are an occasion and church music is a means for them to display their own real or imagined virtuosity as musicians, to the detriment of both the divine services and church music.”²⁴⁷

It is quite remarkable that these musicians saw themselves as the chief exponents of TLS and what was known among them as “the cause” of liturgical music.²⁴⁸ It is true that much of what they opposed – the “choral atrocity; some wobbly tenor with a floating lung; or a movie organist who draws the tremolo stop and leaves it on all through the mass”²⁴⁹ – was also a target of the *motu proprio*. And if they may be excused for overlooking the comparatively muted proposal for congregational singing in TLS, they could hardly have missed its unmistakably bold re-pronouncement twenty-five years later in *Divini cultus*

Liturgical Mass,” advocates music “written in accordance with Motu Proprio,” yet extols the setting of the Offertory proper “Pinguis Est” as a “devotional duet in melodic Italian style” for tenor, baritone and organ – in direct contradiction to TLS. CAT 20 (1934) 148.

²⁴⁶ Buchanan, “Here Comes the Bride,” 445.

²⁴⁷ Cletus Dirksen, C.P.P.S., “What Is Church Music?” AER 101 (1939) 66.

²⁴⁸ One example among many is the account in CAT of the “Dujarie Choir of Notre Dame.” Composed of Brothers of Holy Cross, this choir regularly teamed up with “the neighboring splendid Choir of Moreau Seminary” to “furnish every opportunity for the students of Notre Dame University as well as all of the people of the surrounding cities to know true Liturgical music and to hear it properly rendered.” Examples cited were the Christmas and Easter liturgies, at which the choir sang respectively “the devotional and inspiring Ravanello Mass” and “Refice’s Missa Choralis in entirety.” “They are zealous in living up to the letter of the celebrated Motu Proprio,” says the article. Willard L. Groom, “The Dujarie Choir of Notre Dame,” CAT 20 (1934) 145.

²⁴⁹ Waters, “Choir and Choirmaster,” 145.

sanctitatem.²⁵⁰ Organist-choirmaster Walter Waters makes an eloquent case for the trained musician, saying:

The music at the high mass is a many-sided problem. It is most easily solved when placed in charge of a serious and experienced musician, whose first requisite is a *sympathetic and thorough knowledge of the meaning of the mass itself*, and its beautiful liturgy.²⁵¹

But the problem lay in the understanding of “the meaning of the mass itself.”²⁵²

Emblematically we find this definition in *The Catholic Choirmaster* in 1916:

The true purpose of church music which includes also the Chant is not only to express from the composer's standpoint a truly religious spirit but, as far as possible, inspire the hearers of it with devotional sentiments.²⁵³

Thus Waters, for example, understands that as far as the people are concerned, the task of “improving the music in a parish” means “to strive doggedly and continuously to secure general congregational singing of a few of the best hymns”²⁵⁴ – and this in context of a eucharistic tradition where hymns are not an essential part of the liturgy.

²⁵⁰ “It is very necessary that the faithful taking part in sacred ceremonies should not do so as mere outsiders or mute spectators . . . [W]e should not find the people making only a murmur or even no response at all to the public prayers of the liturgy . . .” DCS 9. Hayburn, 331.

²⁵¹ Waters, “Choir and Choirmaster,” 145. Italics added.

²⁵² Ibid. Lancelot Sheppard describes a weeks-long controversy in the English press, involving many debates about church music, but where typically “The whole point that for the ordinary of the Mass as well as the responses the people are not meant to *sit* and certainly not to listen, but to sing, was hardly mentioned at all by any of the correspondents.” (“Liturgical Movement in England,” 510.)

²⁵³ “J. A. M.,” “A Few Notes on the Progress Made in the Music of our Church Services,” CAT 2 no. 1 (Jan 1916) 2. Italics added.

²⁵⁴ Waters, “Choir and Choirmaster,” 145. “Now as to what are the good hymns: for we all know there are plenty of poor ones. The best authorities place at the head of the list the great undying **Plain Song Melodies** . . .” Ibid. (bold original).

The late Godfrey Diekmann, OSB, provided in 1946 a reliable and splendid summary of the whole matter of musicians and *TLS*, from the perspective of one who lived through the era:

When the *Motu proprio* made its appearance shortly afterward, the musicians failed at first to appreciate its full message. It was a time of lively and even acrid controversy about musical interpretation, more especially about the validity of the chant rhythm proposed by the monks of Solesmes. In the matter of liturgical music, attention was centered almost exclusively on the “music” rather than on the “Liturgy” – which by definition is the common work of the whole people. The all-important Introduction, which furnishes the motivation and spiritual foundation for the entire document, was overlooked because of a more immediate interest in the specific rules to be observed. It was again a case of the trees obstructing the view of the forest, a state of affairs that has to a large extent persisted to our own day.²⁵⁵

3.2.2.4 *The People*

“Still a dream . . .”

*We are up against habit, timidity, prejudice, even a kind of sincerely felt if mistaken loyalty to the “dumb” tradition.*²⁵⁶

If clergy and musicians suffered criticism for their handling of the *motu proprio*, that great horde of the “unwashed,” the people, came in for their own share of the blame. In regard to the liturgy, its music, and their active role, the faithful were seen to have a long list of shortcomings, which broadly fit into two categories: a “supine indifference” to the liturgy and its music, expressed as apathy or lethargy; and second, the more celebrated shortcoming, a paralyzing *dislike* of Gregorian chant of legendary proportions. Underlying

²⁵⁵ “Lay Participation,” in *Symposium*, 141.

²⁵⁶ Fr. Bernard McElligott, OSB, “Congregational Singing: Methods Successful and Unsuccessful,” *CAT* 21 (1935) 76.

both these catalogues of failure lay the oft-cited demon of “vitiating taste,” held to be the root of many evils:

. . .the contemporary taste has been vitiated by current forms of music, the savagery of jazz, the sentimentalism of crooning, the sensualism of romantic song and the frivolity of popular ballads. It is and will be an arduous and tedious task, but if music is to fulfill the hope of our Pontiffs, it is the business of the clergy to educate a corrupted and perverted musical taste and to substitute an affection and enthusiasm for the austere but beautiful forms of true sacred music.²⁵⁷

Apathy

There seemed to be a genuine bewilderment on the part of a great number of the laity, probably most, toward the changes envisioned in the *motu proprio*. If Pius X were concerned about active participation of the people, his concern would have well applied to the Americans, who seemed to care little and have even less energy for reform efforts. Many people “just wanted to be left alone,”²⁵⁸ displaying “a certain apathy and indifference which is not altogether passive but often becomes a mode of silent opposition harder to overcome than fight.”²⁵⁹ As far as many in the pews were concerned, the limits of their “participation” went to “uniting their intention with that of the priest,”²⁶⁰ and no further. Some observers feared that apathy toward the liturgy mirrored a general decline in contemporary “Catholic” taste,²⁶¹ which when not outright secular, leaned favorably

²⁵⁷ McMahon, “Liturgy – Inspiration of Catholic Action,” 114.

²⁵⁸ See Weskamm, “Formation and Life of the Parish Community,” 142. Michael Driscoll has referred to this as the “ex opere operato” attitude.

²⁵⁹ “The Liturgical Music,” *AER* 31 (1904) 180.

²⁶⁰ “The Pilgrim,” “With Scrip and Staff,” *America*, 10 March 1934, 547.

²⁶¹ The topic frequently appears in the literature of the period. See e.g. Frances Auth, CSSR, “The Decline of Catholic Tone and Taste,” *AER* 78 (1928) 619-626.

toward Protestant hymns, and held its nose at all the new-fangled Catholic liturgical talk.²⁶²

If the parish priest were an active reformer, wary parishioners “had the attitude that changes in their parish music set-up were merely a passing fancy of the pastor, and would disappear when a new pastor would be appointed.”²⁶³ Other clergy, as noted above, simply *gave in* to their lethargic flocks, “catering” to their congregations when they grumbled, “The neighboring parish, most representative, has High Mass but three times during the liturgical cycle. Why should *we* have a High Mass every Sunday? The cathedral has only a mixed quartet. Why should *we* have a Schola Cantorum?”²⁶⁴ The blame for the elimination of the Sunday sung Mass, for example, (as well as Vespers and Compline), is laid at the feet of the laity, the excuse from clergy said to be “*that the people do not like them.*”²⁶⁵

An opposite form of congregational lethargy was described as *reluctance* to meddle with choir programs of concerted music. In this instance, laity resistant to change colluded with choirs all too happy to do their performing for them, both groups puzzled at what was suddenly wrong with Haydn, Mozart, and Gounod.²⁶⁶ With classical music and its

²⁶² “The average layman, when he sees a column in his Catholic newspaper headed *liturgy* in big black type, simply passes it over. He expects (very often erroneously) to be presented with a dose of medieval history or symbolism, or instruction on how to sing a quilisma.” Sheppard, “Liturgical Movement in England,” 510.

²⁶³ Clement, “Sacred Music and the Liturgy,” 54.

²⁶⁴ Rev. Edgar Boyle, “For the Motu Proprio’s Thirtieth Birthday,” *America*, 2 December 1933, 213.

²⁶⁵ McMahon, “Liturgy – Inspiration of Catholic Action,” 114. Italics added.

²⁶⁶ See e.g., J. Fischer and Brother, “The Gregorian Chant Manual of the Catholic Hour,” *AER* 94 no. 1 (Jan 1936) 78-80, here 78-9.

imitators, after all, “a small group could produce such a thunderous effect,”²⁶⁷ and the entertainment value was hard to resist:

Every Catholic realizes that the Church is a house of prayer, but at High Mass on Sundays he has been so accustomed to the prevalent abuses that he is inclined to go to this service expecting to be entertained, at least to a large extent, and instead of praying, he listens, turning his attention from the altar to the choir. Deep down in his heart he does not wish to do this, but human nature succumbs to the efforts of the choir to draw all attention to itself. . . . In such churches the congregations are truly entertained, but the holy services become secondary, and the congregation instead of being edified and spiritually strengthened, leave the church with but one thought, namely, how entrancingly the members of the choir sang their parts.²⁶⁸

“The people liked the forbidden music,” noted one contemporary observer; “they were used to it and were reluctant to give it up. It would be a slow process to train them to execute, appreciate, and love the true liturgical music.”²⁶⁹ “It is surprising,” added one musician, “to note the amount of opposition to these pontifical decrees. Many are reluctant in discarding secular habits which they claim have become an inseparable part of modern piety. Apparently they think that the Church is becoming old-fashioned.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Clement, “Sacred Music and the Liturgy,” 54.

²⁶⁸ Rev. F. Joseph Kelly, “The Permanent Element in Church Music,” *AER* 82 (1930) 42-50, here 49-50.

²⁶⁹ Clement, “Sacred Music and the Liturgy,” 54.

²⁷⁰ Roland Boisvert, “Congregational Singing,” *CAT* 23 (1937) 56-59, here 56.

3.2.2.5 Gregorian Chant

“We find about us a certain persistent animosity against the Chant as a musical form of worship.” John Selner, SS²⁷¹

“Only so much abracadabra . . .”

Among all the uneven fortunes of TLS in America, perhaps no fact is more firmly attested than the disastrous reception afforded plainchant among the laity. Ermin Vitry, prominent mover in the Liturgical Movement, wrote an article in *The Catholic Choirmaster* in 1935 simply entitled “Why People Do Not Like Gregorian Chant”: no need to mince words, it was simply an accepted reality.²⁷²

It is a well-known fact that the chant of the Church is not appreciated. Everyone who has been connected in some capacity or other with its restoration will bear witness to this statement. But no one really likes to admit it.²⁷³

Sister M. Millicent, CSA, notes that even among novices for her order, young women who would otherwise have deep love for the Church, “there, on the faces of many of those aspiring to begin their ‘new life’ in Christ, she saw dislike, confusion, even dread at the mere mention of Gregorian Chant.”²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ “Sacred Chant and the Liturgy,” CAT 38 (1952) 3.

²⁷² Ermin Vitry, OSB, “Why People Do Not Like Gregorian Chant,” CAT 22 (1936) 10-12, 15.

²⁷³ Ibid., 10.

²⁷⁴ “Learning the New Song,” CEC 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 43-8, here 43. Sr. Millicent ponders further, 1) Why do so many young people who enter the novitiate have little or no love for chant? and 2) Why, although able to define a number of theoretical terms regarding chant, are they not able to sing them as they appear in the music?

Dislike

Reasons for the dislike of chant are myriad. “Uninspirational, too dry, lacking in beauty.”²⁷⁵ “Ancient and out-of-date, suitable for primitive days, but not suitable for present-day ideas.”²⁷⁶ The tonality of the modes and the free rhythm of chant are said to be off-putting to modern ears. In the wake of two world wars it is even claimed chant is “too German.”²⁷⁷ These objections are brusquely summed up by one episcopal writer, “Many well meaning Catholics dislike plain chant. According to them, it lacks harmony and melody. It is not in keeping with the times, and the people do not want it.”²⁷⁸ Dom Vitry’s article bequeaths to us the resultant picture of the position of chant in American Catholicism by 1935:

It is deplorable that so far nothing has been able to overcome the prejudice against the chant . . . It has, indeed, been welcomed in a few places; but in the majority of churches and chapels there is not even heard the faintest echo of its wondrous strains. We can by no means say that the chant is the general vehicle of Catholic devotion; in very few places indeed has its authority prevailed to the point where it is made the main source of inspiration in Catholic services. . . . it is not any longer the “voice of the people.” And having lost its tradition, the people have truly no voice at all which can be claimed Catholic.²⁷⁹

The problem, then, was how to get people to *like* chant; and here various analyses were made. Vitry felt it was a matter of education, since “Undoubtedly Catholics do not like it because they do not appreciate it. And until they are educated to like and enjoy it, it

²⁷⁵ Fischer and Brother, “The Gregorian Chant Manual of the Catholic Hour,” 78.

²⁷⁶ “The Apostolate,” *OFW* 5 (1931) 521.

²⁷⁷ Clement, “Sacred Music and the Liturgy,” 54.

²⁷⁸ E. M. Dunne, Bishop of Peoria, “Church Music,” *AER* 71 (1924) 465.

²⁷⁹ Vitry, “Why People Do Not Like Gregorian Chant,” 11.

is unreasonable to hope that they will sing the chant.”²⁸⁰ A less positive approach brought up the refrain of “vitiating taste”:

If the people do not want plain chant, it is either because their taste has become vitiated by the jazzy jingles and rag-time tunes heard nowadays on all sides and they cannot appreciate grave, pious, ecclesiastical music, or because the chant may be badly rendered. In the first case the fault lies with the people; in the second, with the singer; but in neither case with the song.²⁸¹

And an assessment darkly alluding to a more serious problem appeared in 1939:

A questionnaire of the average laity would prove that they do not appreciate Gregorian chant. They are handicapped, in the first place, by the fact that, by the *very nature of their condition, they do not have a sufficient appreciation of spiritual values* and therefore much of the spiritual value of plain chant is lost to them.²⁸²

Blaming the Victim?

By the 1940s and 1950s, however, opinions began to surface which suggested the faithful were not so much to be blamed, as they were victims of various circumstances. A church musician for example agrees that “It is regrettable that the average Catholic expects to be entertained in Church. He seeks to please his own musical taste, rather than give Almighty God what He has a right to expect from him.”²⁸³ But this commentator goes on, “*The fault is not his. In most cases he is so badly informed that it would be unfair to place the*

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Dunne, “Church Music,” 466.

²⁸² Dirksen, “What is Church Music?” 62. Italics added.

²⁸³ Boisvert, “Congregational Singing,” 56.

blame on his shoulders.”²⁸⁴ Dom Joel Gastineau similarly writes a long defense of the laity in 1953, his opening paragraph challenging that

Miles of columns in Catholic periodicals are devoted annually to the problem of congregational singing at mass. The layman has been castigated times without number for his lazy passivity, his sad lack of interest in active participation, his being a mute spectator when he should be up and doing. *But does the Catholic deserve this criticism?*²⁸⁵

If they *like* the forbidden music, it was noted, perhaps the faithful had been *conditioned* to being entertained. Strictly from the point of view of cultural habit, four hundred years of silence (especially among the Irish) was “a tradition not easily changed,” observed Richard Schuler.²⁸⁶ There was the debilitating effect of poor teaching techniques used with chant. And an important and overlooked problem was brought to light by Schuler, who wrote that,

I think the greatest single physical limitation to our efforts to encourage the congregation to sing remains the fact that many people since their school days *simply have never been called on to sing*, either in or out of church, and therefore, the very physical ability to use this skill has never been developed.²⁸⁷

Singing, certainly public singing, was fast disappearing as a feature of American culture, proving intractable to its attempted resuscitation in the liturgy. As a result, some concluded that many chants (even of the Ordinary) seemed finally to have proven basically beyond the vocal abilities of ordinary people.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. Italics added.

²⁸⁵ “Sure the People Can Sing,” CEC 80 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1953) 56. Italics added.

²⁸⁶ Richard J. Schuler, “The Congregation: Its Possibilities and Limitations in Singing,” Documentary Appendix-3, in Robert A. Skeris, ed., *Cum Angelis Canere* (St. Paul MN: Catholic Church Music Associates, 1990) 327.

²⁸⁷ “Possibilities and Limitations,” 326. Italics added.

And there was more. Even if people *were* capable of singing the chants, “the capability means nothing if the people don’t *want* to sing. And they didn’t *want* to sing because they didn’t realize *why they should sing*.”²⁸⁸ Here several writers began to broach the idea that “like or dislike of the sacred chant is more a religious than a musical problem.” This went beyond *blaming* the faithful for their “insufficient spiritual values”;²⁸⁹ it suggested instead that *they* had been failed by liturgical traditions to acquire the “true Christian spirit,” essentially stumbling anew onto Pius X’s motivation for *TLS* in the first place.²⁹⁰

It is the same apathy into which the loss of liturgical cooperation has brought them. How could they be expected to sing with pleasure the musical expression of a prayer which has no longer any meaning for them, especially since they have been gradually reduced to mere onlookers and listeners?²⁹¹

Gerald Ellard proposed that the laity didn’t necessarily *dislike* chant, but were so disconnected from the liturgy that they had been rendered virtually “autistic”:

²⁸⁸ Duesing, “Revolution” Part 2, 88.

²⁸⁹ Dirksen, “What is Church Music?” 62.

²⁹⁰ There developed a certain “chicken-and-egg” problem here: Pius X understood chant as enabling the faithful to take an active part in the liturgy, *from which* they would draw the true Christian spirit. Later commentators, searching to understand the general failure of congregations to take to chant, seemed to suggest that the ‘true spirit’ was necessary *first, in order* to appreciate chant, and thus successfully sing it. See, e.g., Dom Michael Ducey, OSB, in *Commonweal* (2 February, 1934): “People who try to live habitually according to the mind of the Church as evinced in her liturgical forms and practices are generally successful in catching the spirit of her chant, irrespective of their musical or scientific capabilities. . .” (Quoted in *America*, 10 March 1934, 547.) Nevertheless, the putative alliance between “liturgical spirit” and love of chant did not always prove out in experience. Dom Columba Kelly, OSB, chant master of St. Meinrad Archabbey, relates that prior to the reforms of Vatican II, chanting could be felt to be a burdensome obligation, even (perhaps especially) to professed religious. On a Sunday afternoon, the monastic offices in Latin chant could be gotten through as quickly as possible, “spit out like machine-gun fire,” fighting back thoughts of jealousy toward those monks who were fortunate enough to be traveling that day – “while we were stuck here doing the offices.” And the Benedictines of St. Meinrad were in no mood for the finer points of rhythmic theories. In 1956 the choirmaster returned from Manhattanville with a metronome, attempting to install even rhythm in the monks’ chanting; the metronome “lasted one week,” smiled Dom Columba. Personal interview, July 2006.

²⁹¹ Vitry, “Why People Do Not Like Gregorian Chant,” 12.

On [the lay-person's] supposition, that the congregation as a whole is a silent *bloc*, and is to remain silent whatever be sung in the choir loft, this layman's subsequent lack of interest, responsibility, and understanding is quite natural. . . . It will not be until the "public" awakes to the privation it is being made to endure that the "musicians' question" will be solved.²⁹²

The sense that congregations were not so much perpetrators as victims led to the slow, reluctant, but steady advance of the disquieting notion that perhaps some music other than Gregorian, and indeed some language other than Latin, might hold the key to the long-sought *participatio actuosa* of Pius X. But before those alternate means were explored, many valiant efforts at implementing the *motu proprio in se* were made, to which we will turn after the concluding section below.

3.2.2.6 A Deeper Question

"Something more is involved."

Certainly all of the manifold issues cited above played some role in the difficult progress of *Tra le sollecitudini* through the twentieth century. There were other observers though, who, having taken a step back, offered somewhat less facile, more subtle reflections on the American church. We will present two such approaches here.

"Just do it."

Eleven years have been spent in a contemplation by the majority of persons willing that others initiate the actual work. Others have spent

²⁹² "Open- or Closed-shop Choirs," 147.

the same amount of time in writing about it. A few have simply “worked” in an attempt to ameliorate conditions.²⁹³

It was Francis Schmitt, ever sharp-tongued but no less observant, who suggested at the late date of 1950 that the *motu proprio* mainly suffered from the “paralysis of analysis,” a hidden lack of willingness masked under respectable-looking reflection. Schmitt maintained that the Church needed to forgo all the procrastinating analyses, and simply get on with the job: “a lot of solutions on paper are of precious little help.”²⁹⁴ Citing Sir Richard Terry's adage that *The art of music has always been ahead of its theory*, “I submit that ever since the Motu Proprio we have been proceeding on quite an opposite proposition.”

Like people out of the book of Exodus, we have sat down to eat and drink and arisen to play. Only we have eaten so much, drunk out of theoretical fountains so long, that we are too much in a state of surfeit to play. It is something of an open question whether we can even get up. It would have been a better idea to play first, and then sit down, for then there would have been something to eat about.²⁹⁵

Schmitt notes the centuries-long history of a glorious Catholic repertory, but “darn few choirs to go with it”: “if only we would stop hollering about it, and sing it instead.”

In any case, it's a matter of production and not of books; it's a matter of artistry and not of after-thought theory. And insistence upon the dark secrets of chironomy is not going to help matters any; neither is the recent absurdity of Gregorian Ballet.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Editor, CAT 1 no. 3 (October 1915) 13.

²⁹⁴ Schmitt, “Boy-Choir and Its Repertoire,” 105.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 107.

In his own way, Schmitt was calling for an “active participation” first, before any turn toward reflection, mirroring Pius X’s conviction of the spiritual dynamic latent in church music and its appropriate use in liturgy.

Something deeper

Running among the vast number of reports and reflections on the *motu proprio* there is another undercurrent, one which suggests that certain problems, still vague in shape but much deeper than “musical reform,” were coming to the surface. Some saw the debacle of *TLS* as part of a perceived general decay of “Catholic culture” in the US, and reacted with renewed insistence on obedience to Rome: “Regardless of personal opinions there can be but one answer and that is obedience. There is no good reason why these decrees should be treated any longer as mere scraps of paper.”²⁹⁷ But many others in contrast saw that the matter was not so simple. Those who had attempted active liturgical participation with laity reported that people needed to *desire* to sing, which was somehow tied up with knowing *why* they should sing.²⁹⁸ The problem of singing, seen as a facet of “religious indifference,” seemed to point to a deeper *internal* reform:

The spirit which pervades the whole of the liturgy also courses through Gregorian chant. It remains for all engaged with it to enter into this spirit so as to give it forth again in song. But how can one enter into it? . . . We now also know that he enters who has an understanding heart. Whoever wishes to sing Gregorian properly must have such a heart. It is the redeemed understanding heart which sees, beyond the visible and audible forms, the loving spiritual interactivity between God and man through the mediatorship of

²⁹⁷ Boisvert, “Congregational Singing,” 56.

²⁹⁸ See Duesing, “Revolution” Part 2, 88.

Christ. . . . He finds himself a member of Christ's Mystical Body,
member of all the redeemed . . . ²⁹⁹

As Robert Brennan concluded in 1945, “The reform of Pius X is not one of externals but a renovation of the spirit of things.”³⁰⁰ John LaFarge spoke of it as the “religious motive” which had been lost liturgically:

We have lost the *religious motive* for singing. There is the heart of the difficulty. When the responses and the choral settings for the Mass were removed from the floor of the churches to the choir loft, the religious motive stayed behind, and withered away. If the people are again to participate in the Mass by communal singing, the religious motive must be restored as well.³⁰¹

It was Virgil Michel, OSB, who eloquently asserted that it was the very lash of “obedience,” what he called the *slave morality*, which in fact choked the life out of this deeper spiritual process, this “religious motive”:

It may make a considerable difference in our religious life, whether we gauge it by the mere fulfillment of obligations to God or look upon it as something more than that. If religion is the mere paying of a debt, it may not inspire to anything more than such payment. An obligation when uppermost in our minds is something that weighs on us, and we pay the obligation to get rid of it and its consequences – whereafter we can breathe more freely for ourselves. Our relation to God, however, is that of a child to its father, and our actions must be more than mere payment of dues . . . ³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Very Rev. Rembert Bularzik, OSB, “Gregorian Chant in its Liturgical Setting,” CAT 20 (1934) 171.

³⁰⁰ “Anniversary of Motu Proprio,” in *Pange Lingua*, 46.

³⁰¹ LaFarge, “Shall the People Sing at Mass?” 271. Italics original.

³⁰² Virgil Michel, OSB, “The True Christian Spirit,” AER 82 (1930) 128-143, here 136. Sister M. Millicent notes, “[E]ven though Chant instructors may endeavor to carry out these objectives in teaching novices, failure is still possible because there is something deficient in the instructors' attitude towards Chant. Are many of them teaching the subject merely in a spirit of 'submission'? . . . [I]f that is the *only* purpose they have, then it is a wonder that not more serious problems have arisen in teaching Chant.” “Learning the New Song,” 44.

Michel turns to the broader implications for ecclesiology, contrasting the notions of *Rechtskirche* and *Liebeskirche*: in the former approach, the liturgy is seen under the juridical aspect of sacrifice; in the latter, under the “sublime act of praise and union with God.”³⁰³ In so doing he brought a latent dimension of *TLS* to light, explaining why the *motu proprio* had no “teeth” and why it consequently had such a difficult journey: “true Christian spirit” was not something *imposable*.

3.2.3 Plans and Implementation

“Moving the rock of ages.”³⁰⁴

“The question is to a large extent one of method.”³⁰⁵

3.2.3.1 Who was to implement?

Just as there was no shortage of analyses of “the problem” (as we have seen above) of instituting the *motu proprio*, so too the plans put forward to redress the struggling situation were more than abundant. Fr. Howell comments that looking for solutions “is matter for a book rather than a sub-title of an article,” but that “it is essential [first] to diagnose the causes of the present lamentable state of affairs.”³⁰⁶ Depending on where one fell in assigning responsibility (or blame) to the “usual suspects” above – clergy, musicians, people – one’s solutions followed suit, and critical observers at the ready were not lacking.

³⁰³ Michel, “True Christian Spirit,” 137.

³⁰⁴ Rev. J. A. Winnen, “Cantate Domino,” *Liturgical Arts* 6 no. 3 (Third Quarter, 1938) 121.

³⁰⁵ McElligott, “Congregational Singing,” 76.

³⁰⁶ Howell, “Let the People Sing at Mass,” 133.

In seeking solutions, Pius X himself painted with a fairly broad brush, concluding the *motu proprio* by specifically enjoining:

all choirmasters, singers, and clerics, all superiors of seminaries, ecclesiastical institutions, and religious communities, all parish priests and rectors of churches, all canons of collegiate and cathedral churches, and, most especially, the Ordinaries of all Dioceses, zealously to support these wise reforms . . .³⁰⁷

Yet one senses Pius' particular feeling, undoubtedly from his own life-experience, that virtually everything depended on pastoral initiative, from the bishops down to local clergy "even in small parishes and in the country."³⁰⁸ This emphasis on the clergy comes through in the penultimate section of *TLS*, which addresses "The Chief Means of Procuring Good Sacred Music." These may be summarized:³⁰⁹

Tra le sollecitudini, Section VIII:

24. Bishops to appoint Music Commission of "persons who are really competent" in each Diocese.
25. In ecclesiastical seminaries and institutions, the study and applied use of Gregorian chant "with all diligence and love."
Encouragement of "figured" liturgical music where possible.
26. In the study of theology, inclusion of "principles and laws of sacred music," as well as "aesthetics of sacred art."
27. Restoration of the ancient choir schools in "the more important churches," and even in smaller and rural churches by zealous clergy, for the instruction of "both children and grown-up people."
28. The support of "all higher schools of Church music" and founding of new ones, in order that "the Church . . . herself provide instruction for her own

³⁰⁷ *TLS* IX.29. Hayburn, 231.

³⁰⁸ *TLS* VIII.27. Hayburn 231.

³⁰⁹ Texts from Hayburn, 230-31.

choirmasters, organists, and singers, so that she may inspire them with the right principles of this sacred art.”

Emphasis on the clergy as primary musical leaders and role-models was made by many observers, Joseph Nolan for one noting “A priest who can sing well can properly edify his people. But all the more – he can help them to sing.”³¹⁰ Stories of faithful support by priests of their music programs (of whatever ilk) are common, of their support for congregational singing, for example, even when “the effect was not all that could be desired,” of showing interest by attending choir rehearsals, and even directing choirs of young people themselves.³¹¹

For others, the primary movers were the musicians, who, as *fons et origo mali*, held the musical fate of both clergy and people in their hands.³¹² Without the proper training – musical *and* liturgical – of musicians, and without their informed cooperation, the effort was seen to be irreparably handicapped (Pius’ awareness of that was addressed in VIII.28 above). Moreover, Catholic choirs were to serve as “models” of the actual musical reforms Pius envisioned; where else would one get an idea of what was intended?

Others yet focused on the people, seeing there the greatest obstacles as well as the most promising opportunities for the future. Battle-scarred promoters of congregational singing repeatedly brought news from the “front” that the fundamental problem was to

³¹⁰ Joseph T. Nolan, “Song at the Altar,” CAT 38 (1952) 9-10, here 10.

³¹¹ See e.g. Henry D. Buchanan, “The Volunteer Choir,” AER 78 (1928) 180-184.

³¹² “But are pastors to blame as much as those who manage priest and people; that is, the irresponsible laity of organ-bench and choir? The *fons et origo mali* is their independence from priestly control.” Stockley, “The Mind of Rome,” 432.

interest the people in singing *at all*, let alone singing chant. Even Fr. Howell finally threw in the towel on some constituencies:

[People] must be made desirous of singing. I believe it is impossible to evoke this desire in a great many old people who, throughout their entire lives, have been brought up on the individualist type of piety. Such people should not be bothered.³¹³

Yet Dom Mocquereau, OSB, himself noted that the future restoration of Catholic congregational singing lay with children, American children at that: “through the medium of the children of America the great heritage of congregational singing will be restored to the Catholic Church.”³¹⁴

Other commentators of course recognized the necessary interdependence of all three groups above in implementing TLS, Sr. M. Marian, OP telling the NCMEA in 1949 that

The much to be desired reform depends upon ecclesiastical authorities, pastors, choirmasters, educational superintendents and supervisors, teachers, and the societies of our parishes.³¹⁵

Paul Hume adds, “Getting one’s congregation to burst into song involved quite a bit of practical planning and the full co-operation of both pastor and choir director, *without both of whom* you can do nothing.”³¹⁶

³¹³ Howell, “Let the People Sing at Mass,” 133.

³¹⁴ “Catholic Congregations to Sing Again,” *The Literary Digest*, 19 June 1920, 39-40.

³¹⁵ “Music in Our Churches,” CAT 35 (1949) 38.

³¹⁶ *Catholic Church Music*, 87. Italics added.

3.2.3.2 Education

In spite of all the earnest efforts that have been made to bring about this much needed reform, Sunday after Sunday our religious sense is offended by the trashy and scandalous performances in our city churches. If this condition is to be remedied, *it will not be by legislation but by education.*³¹⁷

Whether one thought of clergy, musicians, or the faithful as primary implementers, virtually unanimous agreement existed that a *sine qua non* for the success of TLS lay in the area of *education*. In a separate section below we will look at the enormous initiatives spawned by TLS in the parochial school system as well as higher Catholic education. Here we focus on liturgical life at the parish level, the practicalities of Sunday-to-Sunday mass, for here too the matter of a necessary musical background repeatedly came up. For clergy, the need for training in liturgical music beginning in the seminary was repeatedly and forcefully expressed. An early (1916) article in *The Catholic Choirmaster*, for example, lists seminary education as primary:

The inclusion of a course of Sacred Music study in every Seminary; – an obligatory course for every student. *This is the chief remedy* to be applied at this time, in order that our clergy of to-morrow [sic] may possess sufficient knowledge of this important matter to be able to direct the organist when necessary, and supervise the selection of liturgical music.³¹⁸

Joseph Nolan too notes the importance for forming priests of the habitual *experience* in seminary of rendering sung liturgy: “singing, as well as speaking, must be learned by doing.”³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Rev. F. Joseph Kelly, “A National School of Sacred Music,” CAT 19 (1933) 135. Italics added.

³¹⁸ Editor, CAT 2 no. 3 (July 1916) 11. Italics added.

³¹⁹ Nolan, “Song at the Altar,” 10.

As for parish musicians, the *denouement* of Singenberger's Normal School at St. Francis, Wisconsin³²⁰ left a void in training institutions for liturgical musicians, and a call for a National School of Sacred Music in the United States comparable to the Pontifical School of Sacred Music in Rome.³²¹

. . . [T]he Catholic organist or the Catholic choirmaster, has no place or school, properly so-called, where he may engage in serious work training himself for his important position. . . . Indeed such a school is one of the most urgent needs of the Church in America today. When we consider the intimate relationship between the sacred liturgy and the music of the Church, should not we be disturbed at the indifference manifested in so many cases in the selection of those who are to fill the positions of organist and choirmaster? . . . [T]hose whose office is to furnish the ornament of the liturgy, sacred music, receive no training whatsoever.³²²

Dom Ermin Vitry, OSB, one of the leading lights of the liturgical music movement, summed up that for *both* clergy and musicians, "it is the education of educators which is the *first need*; the formation of a fine and true sense of appreciation in the minds of the organizers is the indispensable condition of any musical reform. And when we say educators or organizers we mean all of those who have to do with the direction of church music: pastors, choir directors, organists and instructors."³²³

The faithful, the people, were largely to be the "objects" of this education, and to the extent they were expected to participate actively, attempts at training naturally were

³²⁰ History in Nemmers, 173-176.

³²¹ Rev. F. Joseph Kelly, "A National School of Sacred Music," CAT 19 (1933) 135-6.

³²² Kelly, "A National School of Sacred Music," 135.

³²³ "What Sacred Music Really Ought to Be," OFW 2 no. 12 (Sept 30, 1928) 362-8, here 365. Italics added.

made. Much expectation of course was deferred to future generations through the pedagogy of Catholic schools.³²⁴

3.2.3.3 *Plans*

There was no shortage of “plans” put forward for the implementation of the *motu proprio*, and they tell a tale of the life of *TLS* at the practical parish level. Some plans seemed to pontificate from a theoretical basis, often seeming airily optimistic; others tell of real encounters in the parishes, and these tended to be more sanguine. Early plans often spoke of a grand global approach, while later ones (perhaps limiting goals in the wake of experience?) tended to talk about specific aspects of implementing the reform.³²⁵

Early on, many plans proffered for the *motu proprio* reflected what might be called the “Cecilian” view: that the goal was fundamentally one of instituting “good music” in the Church. Here for example is a typical early “general” plan, summarized as it appeared in *The Catholic Choirmaster* in 1915:

1. The elimination of the trashy, operatic, and undevotional style of music . . . And the publication of a “White List” of acceptable liturgical music for use in all the dioceses of the country.
2. Inauguration of a compulsory course of “sacred music” in all the seminaries, oriented toward “practical” rather than “purely theoretical” aspects.
3. Establishment of at least one “model choir” in every diocese (preferably at the cathedral) for the purpose of modeling approved music.

³²⁴ See below: Education.

³²⁵ A later plan reflecting many years of experience, and attempting a balanced view between professional and people’s music, is that of Richard Schuler, “The Congregation: Its Possibilities and Limitations in Singing” (given as a lecture at Catholic University in June, 1967), in Appendix 3 of *Cum Angelis Canere*.

4. Establishment in the parochial schools of a graded course teaching music fundamentals as well as sacred music. An “absolute necessity” for permanent results in developing “correct taste” away from the “generations of abomination.”
5. Formation of a national Schola Cantorum, for the training of Catholic musicians “in all the branches appertaining to Sacred music.”³²⁶

While the above plan addresses many issues raised in *TLS*, it is notable that there are no particulars related to engaging the actual participation of the *people*. Where people were taken into account in the Cecilian approach, their function usually had to do with elevating the tone of Catholic church music by improving their “scandalous” hymn repertoire, not by their liturgical participation as such. Thus Walter Waters, whose understanding of church music is tellingly summed up in his statement “We all know how effectively the musical part of a service really makes or mars the whole atmosphere,”³²⁷ sees the people in function of the music:

It is surely true that one good practical *means of improving the music* in a parish is to strive doggedly and continuously to secure general congregational singing of a few of the best hymns. The ten o’clock mass, or the last low mass of the day, is the place to begin.³²⁸

Fr. Richard Ginder too thought that the use of “good” hymns (looking longingly at the Episcopal *Hymnal* 1940) and a national Catholic hymnal would “crowd out” the “old favorites”: “And they *are* old favorites. The people have become attached to them. . . .

³²⁶ CAT 1 no. 3 (October 1915) 12.

³²⁷ “Choir and Choirmaster,” 145.

³²⁸ Ibid. Italics added.

One cannot reason with people on this subject. It's bad tactics to make a frontal attack on the old favorites."³²⁹

Getting the People to Sing

For those who were mindful of the dimensions of TLS involving peoples' liturgical participation – that “Music is used in the Church's worship . . . not merely to create an *impression* on the worshippers – but to give *expression* to them, to unlock the singing of the Divine Word within them”³³⁰ – the formulation of plans was a good bit thornier.

Fr. Benedict Ehmann,³³¹ among many others, experienced the stubborn obstacle of getting the people at Mass to become “vocal” at all, out of their long-held practice of privacy and silent devotion. Ehmann and others promoted the use of the Dialog Mass³³² for low masses, which at least acclimated the people to a vocal part: “since there is every prospect that we shall have the Low Mass with us indefinitely, the Dialog method of participation will give the faithful an active part in what has hitherto been so silent a

³²⁹ Rev. Richard Ginder, FAGO, “Singing the Church's Music,” CAT 39 (1953) 152.

³³⁰ Ehmann, “Music in the Liturgy,” 52. Italics original.

³³¹ Rev. Benedict Ehmann was editor of *The Catholic Choirmaster* from 1942 to 1952, succeeding the founding editor, Nicola A. Montani.

³³² The Dialog Mass or “*missa recitata*” was reborn in modern times at the abbey of Maria Laach in Germany, under the leadership of abbot Ildefons Herwegen, on August 6, 1921. (Pecklers, *Unread Vision*, 6-7.) Koenker however seems to place the date earlier, at the first Liturgical Week for lay people at Maria Laach in 1914, considering the event important enough to constitute the starting date of the modern liturgical movement. *Liturgical Renaissance*, 12.) This dialog mass was considered a half-way measure of participation to the full *missa cantata*. Howell observes that since the *motu proprio* not only gave permission but encouraged lay people to *chant* the ordinary of the mass in Latin, “[s]ome twenty years later the logic of the situation won from Rome the concession that they might *say* these same parts in Latin at Low Mass.” “From Trent to Vatican II,” in *The Study of Liturgy*, first edition (1978) 246.

service.”³³³ He also promoted the singing of hymns at Novena services, even those hymns in the worst taste, because they were popular (“You can tell they like it!”) – and because “at least we should be thankful for the fact that large numbers of people are once again getting used to singing in church.”³³⁴ This was an early example of the shift to the importance of the *act* of participative singing over the question of *what* was sung – unquestionably a departure from the balance of concerns in *TLS*, and an issue that was later to divide liturgists and musicians.³³⁵ In fact, hymn-singing was the one area where the Catholic laity were noticeably participative, willing to be vocal; at the same time it was also a primary area of grief for “purists,” the locus of some of the worst musical offences.³³⁶ In any event, familiar hymns were seen as a good place to begin, another priest attesting to “the fact that people will sing only those things which they know and love.”³³⁷ Fr. Ehmann, however, recognized that at Low Mass, the singing of “miscellaneous hymns,” even though

³³³ “Music in the Liturgy,” 54. For a commentary on the official introduction of the *missa recitata* in Pius XII’s 158, see Frederick R. McManus, “The Last Words of Pius XII: A Commentary,” *CAT* 44 (1958) 158-9, 179. McManus notes that the official support “marks the first great change in the form of low Mass in 300 years.” (158) World Library of Sacred Music published a Mass card right away in 1958 that contained the simple Latin dialogues for people, certain of the Mass prayers in English, and several English hymns. Description of the resultant participative liturgy is at Rev. James W. King, SJ, “Song and Prayer at Mass for All,” *CAT* 47 (1958) 82-3.

³³⁴ Ehmann, “Music in the Liturgy,” 54.

³³⁵ See below, chapter 4.

³³⁶ Fr. Richard Ginder wrote an article in *The Priest* in 1947 entitled “Our Catholic Hit Parade,” wherein he lampooned the eight favorite Catholic hymns of the day, according to a contest survey. The eight top hymns, “in order,” were: 1) O Lord I Am Not Worthy; 2) Holy God We Praise Thy Name; 3) Mother Dear, O Pray For Me; 4) Good Night, Sweet Jesus; 5) *Panis Angelicus*; 6) Schubert’s *Ave Maria*; 7) On This Day, O Beautiful Mother; 8) Silent Night. Needless to say, the article provoked a huge outcry, which in turn produced various defensive follow-ups, etc. *The Priest* 3 no. 11 (Nov 1947) 811-16; also “Our Catholic Hit Parade (II): An analysis of the reaction,” *The Priest* 4 no. 1 (Jan 1948) 17-21.

³³⁷ Rev. Maurice C. Herman, “Homely Hints,” 267.

participatory, was not ideal: “granted that singers are active, but they are active, so to say, on a tangent, *and not within the circumference of the Mass.*”³³⁸

Hymns were also considered a good place to acclimate people to Latin and chant – commonly held to be the two biggest obstacles to the laity opening their mouths. J.

Vincent Higginson wrote an article in 1950 suggesting the use of the liturgical Latin hymns as a way of getting people to attempt both Latin and chant, before scaling the daunting heights of congregational ordinaries.³³⁹ For this purpose Ermin Vitry produced a booklet, *Hymns of the Church*,³⁴⁰ providing “almost all of the Gregorian hymn melodies which the people should sooner or later come to know and love.”³⁴¹ Those favoring the use of hymns for Catholic purposes often cite the success of the Protestants, and the anticipated pay-back of “taking a page from the Reformation.”

The question of introducing Gregorian congregational ordinaries received a good deal of comment, as over time its achievability came increasingly under doubt, even as its obligation seemed to become clearer. The process was more and more seen to be very fragile, subject to sudden and sometimes irreversible failure, one in which a congregation had to be carefully nurtured along. Common warnings included beginning with only one

³³⁸ Ehmann, “Music in the Liturgy,” 54. Emphasis added.

³³⁹ “The Latin Hymn and Congregational Singing,” CAT 36 (1950) 105-7. Even before attempting hymns, Higginson (echoing Ehmann) noted the problem of getting people “vocal” at all, suggesting the “profitable means” of using the Dialog Mass and singing of the Responses. The late date of these remedial goals certainly tells a huge tale.

³⁴⁰ Dom Ermin Vitry, OSB, *Hymns of the Church* (O’Fallon, MO: Copyright by Dom Ermin Vitry, OSB, 1943.) Vitry gave both the original Latin as well as English versions for the hymns in this collection. [Appendix D].

³⁴¹ Referred to by Herman, “Homely Hints,” 268.

or two “easy” Ordinaries,³⁴² and to go *slow*: “No pastor will be successful with congregational singing if he starts with the *Missa de Angelis*.”³⁴³ Dr. J. Roff took the tack of beginning congregations with the *Credo* alone, noting (again as late as 1950) “the elaborate nature of most of the ordinaries . . . presents a real obstacle to congregational singing.”³⁴⁴ Roff, a musician, shows his Cecilian leanings when he claims a bit disingenuously that “human nature being what it is, when a feast is celebrated, the choir is expected to give forth with something different . . . [P]articularly on solemn occasions, one has to give in a little to the traditional demands of the majority: a part Mass will always be a change . . .”³⁴⁵ For Roff, however, the *Credo* should always be reserved for the people, not only shortening a notoriously long movement of part-masses, but offering an accessible entry-point for congregations unused to singing.

One notable figure who claimed “long and successful experience” in getting people to sing chant Ordinaries was the Benedictine Dom Ermin Vitry. In its third issue, the young *Orate Fratres* presented Dom Vitry’s plan for incorporating the people into the singing of chant,³⁴⁶ involving four general steps, and four specific ones:

General Steps

1. Pastor must show explicit support.

³⁴² See Howell, “Let the People Sing at Mass,” 135.

³⁴³ Herman, “Homely Hints,” 268.

³⁴⁴ “The Credo and Congregational Singing,” CAT 36 (1950) 153.

³⁴⁵ Roff, “The Credo and Congregational Singing,” 153.

³⁴⁶ Roger Schoenbechler, OSB, “The Chant in Parish Churches,” OFW 3 no. 11 (Sept 8, 1929), 364-68.

2. Begin with the children (openness, good examples)
3. Use organizations such as Sodalities for small-group training.
4. Program design will need great care, patience and perseverance.

Specific Steps

1. Start with a few easy Latin hymns at evening devotions. At High Mass, sing *only* the responses “for a long time.” “By no means . . . should one start with the whole Mass, for this would result in failure, as is obvious.”³⁴⁷
2. Prepare the “most simple Masses found in the *Kyriale* (such as nos. 12, 13, 15).”
3. Once step #2 is mastered, a more elaborate Mass can be prepared for solemnities.
4. Restore the Proper of the Mass, primarily by the choir, in *tono recitativo* (“in the form of recitation or psalmody”) “for a long time.”³⁴⁸

Along with these general “strategies,” dozens of specific practical methods were put forward over time. Dr. Roff for example was one of many offering such practical ideas as providing people with pew-cards (with the Plain chant music and text), having the laity stand to sing, and allowing them to sing without interference from the organ (at least on the responses). Others added intuitively worthwhile pieces of advice:

pitch the chants low enough for the men to join in (“ . . . it is about time that the responsibility for real participation in the Mass is placed squarely upon the shoulders of those who are really responsible, i.e. the men of the parish. The men are the heads of families and they are obligated to lead their families in the communal worship of God.”)³⁴⁹

Begin with what people “know and love”: “Proceed from the known to the unknown with the congregation, and do so poco a poco.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 368. Italics added.

³⁴⁸ Schoenbechler, “The Chant in Parish Churches,” 368.

³⁴⁹ Herman, “Homely Hints,” 270.

Success at the beginning is so important. Early failures are hard to overcome.”³⁵⁰

Repeat the same music over and over again

The most important “practical” question however revolved around two methods of “priming the pump”: congregational rehearsals, or the nucleus choir? To many it seemed obvious, as to J. Alfred Schehl, AAGO, reflecting on fifty years in church music, that “While it may be possible to have the congregation sing portions of the Mass, this cannot be done without rehearsals.”³⁵¹ Yet the reports “from the field” invariably tell of the failure of this method, which demanded a competent teacher (often not the priest) and a congregation that would stay behind after Mass. Herein lay a problem, as

most worshipers disappear at the end of a service, leaving a devoted few scattered about the church. These few (generally the people who do everything else in the parish) are practiced for half an hour, and as it is their [only?] instruction there is perhaps not much notable result. . . . [N]ext Sunday . . . the bulk of the congregation has disappeared as before.³⁵²

Fr. Richard Ginder adds further description of the parish Sunday “atmosphere,” important for filling out the context in which *TLS* struggled:

Neither the Mass nor Benediction would permit such a routine, and our Sunday schedules are so crowded that there would be no time for an after-Mass rehearsal. Besides, only the priest would have the authority to mount the pulpit and conduct such a hymn practice. And if the priest were the finest musician in the country, he would still be so exhausted from the fast and his weekend duties that he would have little vitality left over.³⁵³

³⁵⁰ Schuler, “Congregation: Its Possibilities,” 329.

³⁵¹ Schehl, “Reminiscences of Fifty Years,” 38.

³⁵² McElligott, “Congregational Singing,” 75-76.

³⁵³ Ginder, “Singing the Church’s Music,” 150. Again, note the late date, 1953.

Fr. Bernard McElligott, OSB, notes the sad outcome: “The priest comes to the conclusion that congregational singing of the Mass is impossible under these circumstances, and gives up the attempt until better times.”³⁵⁴ “It is perhaps just as well,” McElligott points out, “to accept the fact that this method of congregational practices does not often lead to success.”

It means asking *everybody* to start doing something quite out of the ordinary and to persevere in a sacrifice of time for several weeks on end, a difficult thing *if the congregation are not themselves thoroughly convinced beforehand of the supreme importance of what they are asked to do.*³⁵⁵

The second tactic, suggested by both Roff and McElligott among many others, was the use of the “nucleus choir.” In this approach (“tested by personal experience”),

the choir director should train a small nucleus of men and women, and place them at strategic points throughout the church: in no time the neighbors will pick up the melody and gradually the whole congregation will join in the singing.³⁵⁶

A variation of this idea was simply to move the choir (which in any event “is apt to and often does drift into a mere theatrical performance . . . [and] does not arouse the congregation to any degree of piety worth mentioning”³⁵⁷) right into the body of the church, to lead the people. Combining this method of the “nucleus choir” with a *gradual* introduction of single items from the “simpler” Masses (beginning with the *Credo*, for example) claimed successful outcome, though the number of parishes actually trying it was probably limited.

³⁵⁴ McElligott, “Congregational Singing,” 76.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. Italics added.

³⁵⁶ Roff, “The Credo and Congregational Singing,” 153, 188.

³⁵⁷ *Baltimore Catholic Review*, n.d., cited in CAT 1 no. 3 (1915) 9.

3.2.3.4 *Two Reports from the Field*

*Potuerunt hi, potuerunt hae, quare non nos?*³⁵⁸

Some of the most compelling and revealing insights into the life of *TLS* in the US come from those who gave frank accounts of their actual experiences in implementing the reform at the parish level. We will recount briefly two such witnesses here.

In 1951, *Caecilia* ran a three-part series entitled “Revolution in a Country Parish,” recounting the mission of two Benedictine monks over eighteen months at “an extremely backward country parish” in the United States.³⁵⁹ The monks worked as a team, seeing their mission as “giving back to these people the Christian birthright” by introducing congregational participation at the *Missa Cantata* and other liturgical functions. This was to be something of a test case, as the parish, “a notoriously difficult group,” was made up of non-homogeneous groups of people of “extreme rural crudity . . . with a quality of voice that could be generated only by shouting commands to mules . . .”³⁶⁰ “If our plans worked here *a fortiori* they’d work anywhere,” noted the Benedictines. An interesting facet of their approach was to assume “from the start that failure in any degree would be largely attributable to faulty technique.”³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ “They are able to do it here, they are able to do it there: what’s to prevent us?” Lucien Duesing, OSB, “Revolution in a Country Parish,” *CEC* 78 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1951) 70-72, here 70.

³⁵⁹ Duesing, OSB, *CEC* 78 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1951) 70-72 Part I; no. 3 (Mar-April 1951) 88-92, 127 Part II; no. 4 (May-June 1951) 140-141, 165-6 Part III.

³⁶⁰ Duesing, “Revolution” (Part I) 70.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

The experience of the Benedictine monks in this small parish, characterized by various successes and not infrequent stumblings, yielded many valuable practical lessons.³⁶² And though their efforts did not uniformly produce glowing results, over time the mission yet yielded a “tremendous difference in mentality” in this congregation, one they did not hesitate to term a “Revolution.” However the most important lessons which surfaced in this rural parish, as elsewhere, touched on something deeper: the monks were confronted with the more elusive problem of what made people *want* to sing. The echoes from this deeper question will be noted in the conclusion below.

Helen Flick. In 1954 *Caecilia* ran a two-page article summarizing the experience of a musician in a ten-year old parish in Kenyon, Minnesota, a ninety-percent Protestant town with no Catholic schools.³⁶³ Helen Flick was a musician but “unskilled in the art of church music.” But her pastor “Father Louis” insisted on following the church’s music rules to the letter: “We will do it right at St. Michael’s even if we would be the only parish in the Archdiocese that does.” An early adult choir was successful until the end of the second World War caused relocation of most members. At that point, as in so many places, “we decided that in our parish, our children were the answer. We would train them and they would become the nucleus for congregational participation later on.” Ms. Flick began with a few girls, as the pastor felt the boys wouldn’t be interested, but in this case, “the boys were not to be outdone and demanded to know when they were going to sing.” She held one rehearsal a week, at 4:15 p.m. after school with the town children

³⁶² These practical lessons are catalogued in Appendix C.

³⁶³ Helen Flick, “Motu Proprio in a Small Parish of Kenyon, Minnesota,” *CEC* 81 no. 4 (May-June 1954) 146-7. Short quotes in this paragraph are all from this article.

from grades three through eight – a challenging spread. But the children’s parents were enthusiastic, and “the choir was put on almost the same basis as the catechism. Where it was at all possible the children were expected to attend both.”

The active support and intentionality of the priest comes through loud and clear in this article. Fr. Louis organized sports activities before and after the choir practices, to get the older boys to continue participating. And he “was always so encouraging”:

He praised the children generously when they deserved it but he also tolerated no nonsense. For the first two years he came to every practice and was a tremendous help in establishing right concepts.³⁶⁴

He gave “his little talks” to the children, inspiring their devotion: “*Their part in the Mass he made very important, and he stressed its value for their eternal salvation.*”³⁶⁵

The parish began right away the Missa Recitata, to familiarize the children with the Latin. In about three months’ time the children began singing the High Mass – not perfectly, but reasonably well, it is claimed, and prayerfully. After some years, the children were divided into older and younger groups; and though the older ones had learned several Masses, she regularly used Mass X on Sundays so that “the little ones can participate.” Even after one year’s training, the results with the “little ones” (pre-junior high school) were impressive: they were able to sing the *Sanctus*, the *Agnus Dei*, all the responses, and an array of seasonal hymns: *Rorate caeli, Veni, Veni Emmanuel, Resonet in Laudibus, Adeste Fideles, Attende Domine, Parce Domine, Adoramus te Christe, O Filii et Filiae*, and the *Regina Caeli* (“besides the usual English hymns for the same seasons.”)

³⁶⁴ Flick, “Kenyon, Minnesota,” 147.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. Italics original.

Ms. Flick furthered her own skills by attending three summer sessions with the Sisters of St. Benedict at St. Joseph, Minnesota, and one summer at the Gregorian Institute at St. John's, Collegeville, studying Gregorian chant. Though she is quick to credit others, it is evident that the success at St. Michael's in Kenyon is due in no small part to her own willingness and skills with children. "[T]his work . . . has been the most gratifying of any I have ever done," she says, and concludes with what could be an emblem for the entire life of TLS: "It has been hard and discouraging at times, but it has had its bright moments too."³⁶⁶

3.2.3.5 Deeper Questions (Redux)

"If people don't want to sing, they won't respond to any method."

In 1934 Dom Michael Ducey, OSB, wrote a letter in *Commonweal* stating that in order for people to "catch the spirit" of Gregorian chant, the most important condition for them was to "live habitually according to the mind of the Church as evinced in her liturgical forms and practices, irrespective of their musical or scientific capabilities."³⁶⁷ While this might sound like so much Benedictine puffery, in fact those in the field reported back experiences hinting similarly at some larger question. The two monks above came to this conclusion:

It was thought that the people were sufficiently familiar with these melodies to sing them without much technical preparation. *But the capability means nothing if the people don't want to sing. And they didn't want to sing because they didn't realize why they should sing.*³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ Flick, "Kenyon, Minnesota," 147.

³⁶⁷ *Commonweal* (2 February 1934), 384. This assertion of course touched off a skirmish in subsequent letters in *America*.

³⁶⁸ Duesing, "Revolution" (Part 2), 88. Italics added.

What they saw as lacking was the sense of the Catholic community as the *Body of Christ*, certainly the foundational theology of the liturgical movement and the focus of Pius XII's timely *Mystici Corporis* (1943). Human beings as “*ens sociale*” can hardly be overestimated in the matter of participation in the Mysteries of the Church,” said the monks, citing “that great solidarity effected in us by our re-creation in Christ, whereby we are the extension of His life on earth as members of the Mystical Body.”³⁶⁹

The realization of this truth, so far from the consciousness of many Christians today, is a *sine qua non* of corporate participation.³⁷⁰

To some degree, this consciousness was gained simply by the doing: “The strongest motives must be of necessity an enlightening of the mind and movement of the will *effected by conscious contact with the means of grace*.”³⁷¹ Helen Flick too states that she approached her musical work with children “through the liturgy,” using Fr. Howell's ideas of explaining to them the Mass and the liturgical year, and “their little share [in] our community participation on Sundays.”³⁷²

Fr. Howell himself felt that the place to begin was with the early mass, for there at least people showed some participative inclinations by receiving Holy Communion.³⁷³ He notes that a complete plainsong Sung Mass can be done in twenty-six to thirty-two minutes,

³⁶⁹ Duesing, “Revolution” (Part 2), 88.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 92, 127. Italics added.

³⁷² Flick, “Kenyon, Minnesota,” 147.

³⁷³ “Let the People Sing at Mass,” 134. Interestingly, Howell notes the current custom of separating the spoken “receiving” mass from the sung High Mass, “render[ing] those two forms of participation mutually exclusive.”

meeting the objection that “even the ‘good people’ [at the early Mass] would not tolerate the consequent postponement of their breakfasts.”³⁷⁴ Never one to mince words, the English priest refers to the others – those who come to the last Mass (presumably *Missa Cantata*) – as “predominantly the indolent and the ignorant – the most unpromising material, short of the actually lapsed, which the parish contains. I maintain that it is useless trying to make these people sing.”³⁷⁵ But for Fr. Howell as for the monks and Ms. Flick, the entire enterprise needed grounding in a liturgical consciousness, finally the most important of any “plan”:

Until parishes regularly (say once a year?) have some kind of a Liturgical Week for the purpose of re-orienting the minds of the people from the exclusively individualistic to the social (liturgical) outlook on divine worship, we shall never have a singing people.³⁷⁶

3.2.4 Diocesan/Episcopal Oversight: Bishops and Commissioners

VIII. The Chief Means of Procuring Good Sacred Music

24. In order that these instructions be exactly carried out, the Bishops should, if they have not already done so, appoint in each Diocese a special commission of persons who are really competent in the matter . . .

IX. Conclusion

29. Finally, we desire . . . most especially, the Ordinaries of all Dioceses, zealously to support these wise reforms . . .

Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini*

To the extent that *Tra le sollecitudini* met with success in the United States, there is evidence that much credit goes to episcopal oversight and initiative. As among the clergy

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 135.

³⁷⁵ Howell, “Let the People Sing at Mass,” 134.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

and laity, the reception of the *motu proprio* among American bishops was mixed, in places not visibly enacted. But where the reform was accepted and promulgated, vigorous episcopal leadership and Diocesan Commissions are evident under several leading figures of this era, including Bishops Glennon of St. Louis, Walsh of Newark, McLaughlin of Paterson, N.J., Murray of St. Paul, Schrembs of Cleveland, Boyle of Pittsburgh, Elder of Cincinnati, and Schlarman of Peoria. In pastoral letters, in sermons, in addresses to congresses of musicians, liturgists and clergy, and in journal articles, eloquent support of the goals of the *motu proprio* was not lacking from these prelates.

- There was theological support:

“The purpose of the Church is to unite all her members in the liturgical action of the Mystical Body of Christ even as all are united in the sacramental life imparted by the Son of God through the ministry of His priests. Unison of prayer is facilitated, elevated and enriched by ecclesiastical music which is an inspiration and support in united prayer. The voices of all the congregation should be incorporated into this ennobled expression of praise so that the voice of the people becomes the voice of the Church lifting up her soul to the throne of her divine Spouse. *Any other conception of church music is in contradiction to the spirit and purpose of divine worship.* The voice of the individual must be subordinated to the voice of the whole congregation, even as the instrument which sustains that voice must be subordinated to the vocal expression of adoration, thanksgiving and petition.”³⁷⁷

- There was historical support:

“The congregation, old and young, of both sexes, should join the choir in singing *their part* of the music as emphasized by the Holy Father and in conformity with traditional Catholic discipline. It should be borne

³⁷⁷ John G. Murray, Archbishop of St. Paul, MN. Quoted in [n.a.], “Church Music and Congregational Singing,” *OFW* 9 no. 5 (March 23, 1935) 230. Italics added.

in mind that this ideal is not an *innovation*. Quite the contrary, it is a *restoration*.”³⁷⁸

- There was support from the wider perspectives and intentions of the Liturgical Movement:

“Modern Christians seem to be content in church to unite their *intention* with that of the priest, without understanding the words of the prayer. Not so the ancient Christians. They were desirous that the *actio* (the tremendous Act of God) should be shared by all, and be eminently dramatic, so that not only the bishop, but the priests, deacons, and other clergy, the singers and the people should have their own distinctive parts to perform.”³⁷⁹

“The question of the *popular* singing of the chant is crucial, and it is *fundamental to the reform plan that the chant* in its simpler forms *be restored to the use of the people*.”³⁸⁰

- There was the inestimable support of sheer personal determination:

“We shall not be content nor shall we rest until, with the help of God, every Parish Church and Institutional Chapel shall have at least one Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation throughout the year sung with the correct rendition of the Proper and Ordinary parts, with the laity singing the Ordinary and making the responses to the priest.”³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ John G. Glennon, Archbishop of St. Louis. Quoted in Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 151. Gerald Ellard gathers a number of episcopal quotations in this chapter on congregational singing in *Men at Work at Worship* (pp. 146-167), for the purpose of convincing lay people of their role.

³⁷⁹ Joseph H. Schlarman, Bishop of Peoria. Quoted in “With Scrip and Staff,” *America*, 10 March 1934, 547-8.

³⁸⁰ Joseph Schrembs, Archbishop of Cleveland. Quoted in Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 150. Italics original.

³⁸¹ Thomas H. McLaughlin, Bishop of Paterson, N.J., “A Bishop Speaks on the Vox Populi,” 103.

3.2.4.1 Commissions

Many bishops complied with *TLS* in establishing music commissions, Gerald Ellard listing some forty-six commissions in the American church as of 1940.³⁸² Several bishops too received (having sought?) prominent publicity for the successful work of their commissions, notably Newark, St. Louis, Detroit, and (unashamedly, the Johnnie-come-lately) Chicago.³⁸³ But the picture was always mixed. In 1953 *Caecilia* published “A Statistical Report for the ‘Motu Proprio’ Year” by W. Francis Goineau,³⁸⁴ which included the following table on American music commissions:

³⁸² Complete list in “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 163-4. For a good summary of American diocesan commission work by 1958, see Aloysius Kroll, OFM Cap, “Diocesan Music Regulations – Report on a Survey,” *CEC* 85 no. 4 (Fall, 1958) 381-7. Hume notes in 1956 that of one hundred and twenty-nine dioceses and archdioceses in the US, “[a]t last count there were sixty-five music commissions, the majority of them consisting of one lone ‘commissioner.’” *Catholic Church Music*, 9-10. Notable in Ellard’s 1940 list is the absence of Chicago and Boston.

³⁸³ For Detroit, see n.a., “The Palestrina Foundation of Detroit: *Cardinal Mooney’s Answer to the Challenge of the Motu Proprio*,” *CEC* 80 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1953) 52-4, 60, 81. For Chicago, see Dosogne, “Sacred Music in the Archdiocese of Chicago.”

³⁸⁴ W. Francis Goineau, “A Statistical Report for the ‘Motu Proprio’ Year,” *CEC* 81 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1953) 33-35.

TABLE 1.
 “IS THERE A MUSIC COMMISSION IN YOUR PARTICULAR ARCHDIOCESE OR
 DIOCESE?”

	Archdiocese (83% respond rate: 19 of 23 archdioceses)	Diocese (60% respond rate: 38 of 63 dioceses)
Active Commission	10	6
Nominal Commission	2	10
No Commission	7	21
Declined to Answer	-	1

These results again leave one asking whether the glass was half-empty or half-full: about half the Archdioceses had commissions, only about one-fourth the Dioceses. But regardless of the numbers, there was no question of the impact of episcopal leadership (for better or worse) in written responses to Goineau's survey:

- “No music commission exists. We asked the Bishop to appoint one. He wanted to wait until enough priests became pastors who were educated at the _____ Seminary where they get a good course in music. That means waiting about 20 years.”
- “There seems to be no need whatever of a music commission to exist.”
- “I suppose we have none because the Bishop has never thought it necessary to form one.”

- “One is certainly needed, but I am unable to give any reason for the non-existence of such a commission.”³⁸⁵

Typical steps taken by diocesan music commissions included:

1. Designating an official Diocesan hymnal.³⁸⁶
2. Drawing up lists of acceptable music. Often cited here was the White List of the Society of St. Gregory in America.³⁸⁷
3. For Organists:
 - a. Forming a Catholic Guild of Organists
 - b. Instituting a qualifying certification³⁸⁸
 - c. Providing educational opportunities
 - d. Stipulating injunctions³⁸⁹
4. Establishing musical directives and curricula for diocesan schools.³⁹⁰
5. Holding large-scale choral functions enlisting the schools.³⁹¹
6. Holding Diocesan music conferences and Concerts of Sacred Music.
7. Formation of various Diocesan “sector” choirs: Priests’ (or Male) Choir, Sisters’ Choir, Boys Choir, etc.

³⁸⁵ Goineau, “Statistical Report,” 34.

³⁸⁶ See e.g. “Church Music and Congregational Singing,” 230.

³⁸⁷ See e.g. “Diocesan Regulations for the Adoption of Church Music,” *AER* 21 (1899) 416; *A Guide in Catholic Church Music* (Fischer, Pustet, Herder, Benziger, \$1.00) “by order of the First Provincial Council of Milwaukee and St. Paul, with preface by Bishop Marty,” cited in Stockley, “The Pope and the Reform” Part 2, *AER* 30 (1904) 400-01. Goineau reports that “Wherever the regulations have been issued it has come to light that the White List of the Society of St. Gregory is in use as a basic list of approved music.” “A Statistical Report,” 34.

³⁸⁸ “Church Music and Congregational Singing,” 231.

³⁸⁹ Goineau, “Statistical Report,” 34.

³⁹⁰ See e.g. for San Francisco, Rev. Edgar Boyle, “Congregational Singing in an Archdiocese,” *OFW* - U11, 417-9. For Detroit, see “The Palestrina Foundation of Detroit,” 53.

³⁹¹ See below, p. 127, “Massed choirs.”

Cincinnati. Certain American dioceses, of course, stood out for their exemplary efforts, some in fact having formed music commissions long before *TLS*, in the wake of earlier papal directives, as for example at Cincinnati in response to *De musica sacra* of 1894.³⁹² This early commission (made up of five priests) issued twelve articles regulating the uses of music in diocesan churches, and then pledged itself to active enforcement by:

1. Examining the music used in the churches during Mass, Vespers, Benediction, and other liturgical devotions.
2. Excluding from approval and use all compositions in which the liturgical text has been set aside, either by omission, addition, or offensive repetition.
3. Proscribing all profane and frivolous compositions, operatic and popular airs, to which the liturgical text has been adapted.³⁹³

Cincinnati later continued to blossom into a shining example of the ideals of *TLS* through the work of Archbishop McNicholas and his Diocesan Supervisor of Music, Professor John J. Fehring:

All of this activity must be correlated to the idea of general congregational activity in liturgical affairs, being one phase of Catholic Action, of community thought and activity, *having an evident sociological effect*, so popular today, but transcending all is the *restoration of the service to the people*. The principle that congregations be active participants and not merely auditors has been a principle of the Archdiocese for the past eight years.³⁹⁴

Pittsburgh. The uneven fate and mixed fortunes of music commissions is well demonstrated in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. An early commission – formed “some years

³⁹² For *De musica sacra*, see Hayburn, 141-2. The account of Cincinnati is given in “Diocesan Regulations for the Adoption of Church Music,” *AER* 21 (1899) 414-418.

³⁹³ Text adapted from “Diocesan Regulations for the Adoption of Church Music,” 417-8.

³⁹⁴ John J. Fehring, “Congregational Singing,” *America*, 22 July 1933, 380-81. Quoted in Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 157. Italics original.

before” 1916 – drew up an elaborate plan, which apportioned the diocese into districts, each with its own Director and all under a Director General. This commission intended to authorize approved music, establish Schola Cantorums for priests, parochial schools, other children, and Scholas for organists and choir directors. “What an object lesson,” crowed *The Catholic Choirmaster*, would Pittsburgh have been had the plan been carried out – but alas, unnamed “[u]ntoward events prevented the carrying out of the program . . . and as a consequence united action on the subject was out of the question.”³⁹⁵ CAT suggests the fated failure of commissions in general during that time, without really adverting to the reason:

Taken as a whole, the [Pittsburgh] plan was admirable in every respect and it is to be regretted that the commission plan, here as elsewhere, was *doomed to complete failure* so far as the actual results are concerned. The issuance of a list of approved music has been the sum total of the activities manifested by nearly all the commissions throughout the country.³⁹⁶

Moreover, the story suggests that many commissions existed only on paper (“In looking over the official directory one will note the omission of the list of members of the commission on church music in many dioceses.”³⁹⁷) and then points to where success seemed to be forthcoming: “Probably more dependence is being placed upon individual effort than any influence the commission may be able to exert in the matter.”³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 16.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. Italics added.

³⁹⁷ CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 16.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. Further down, in an unattached story, CAT corroboratingly notes “Father Gleason is inculcating a love for the true type of devotional music among his pupils and he is obtaining exceptional results through the force of a charming personality.” Ibid., 16.

Later, however, Pittsburgh was to be a shining success, proclaimed by *The Caecilia* as “the leading diocese in the liturgical movement.”³⁹⁹ Gerald Ellard describes the sequential program instituted by Bishop H. C. Boyle, a series of annual goals, “one step at a time . . . a date set for its inauguration, a definite sanction announced for its non-observance.”⁴⁰⁰

Year 1. Complete inventories of music to be submitted for approval. All local organists called up for examination.

Year 2. Ten centers set up for Organist training and examination.

Year 3. Proper must be sung in chant or *recto tono* at all High Masses.

Year 4. Internal organization of choirs.

Year 5. Organization of boys' choir by all parishes with parochial school; to sing at least once a month at Sunday High Mass.

Year 6. Two church choirs, chosen alphabetically, give Sunday afternoon recitals in Palestrina Hall. Open to public feedback.

Year 7. Permanent Organists' Guild organized; opening of School of Music at Duquesne University; special teachers' courses at Mount Mercy Academy.

Year 8. Plainchant a part of curriculum in all parochial schools from 4th grade up.

Along the way, Bishop Boyle had the music commission

prepare a list (Class A) of “well trained and experienced” organists, choir instructors, and school teachers in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. This list is to serve the purpose of rewarding those who have observed the Church's requirements in music, and will distinguish them from those who insist upon old abuses.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ CEC 66 no.7 (Aug 1939): entire issue, cited in Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 157. Pittsburgh was home to Father Carlo Rossini, a major figure in twentieth century Catholic church music.

⁴⁰⁰ Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 157.

⁴⁰¹ N.a., “Editorials,” *Liturgical Arts* 6 no. 2 (1937) 59.

A permanent Organists' Guild was instituted in the diocese, a School of Music opened at Duquesne University offering church music certificates, and special teachers' courses inaugurated at Mount Mercy Academy. The Gregorian Institute of Sacred Music, under the direction of Stephen Thuis, OSB, was opened on a year-round basis at Sacred Heart Parish, a nationally-known center of liturgical life in Pittsburgh.⁴⁰²

San Francisco. As a final vignette, another Boyle, Rev. Edgar Boyle, Archdiocesan Director of Liturgical Music, presents a wonderfully realistic “long view” of commission work in a West coast archdiocese.⁴⁰³ Fr. Boyle notes that liturgical music efforts began in San Francisco in 1924, “and in 1941, after years of hard work, we have [only] laid the foundation. Now we are building the edifice.”⁴⁰⁴ Notable in Boyle's efforts are the enrollment of all parishes in the Archdiocesan Guild of Musicians (organists, choirmasters and singers), the *daily* teaching of Gregorian music in grade schools (with the entire student body singing the Mass, etc.), and weekly classes for priests, sisters and brothers in the chants of the Mass and liturgical hymns, “*with this in mind, that they are to instruct the faithful, to sing the proper and the common of the Mass in their respective parishes when called upon to do so . . .*”⁴⁰⁵ Boyle's success in his own parish of St. Monica, in getting the laity to chant Compline as well as the *Missae Cantatae*, prompted his Bishop, John J. Mitty, to request

⁴⁰² This summary follows the discussion in Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 157-9.

⁴⁰³ Boyle, “Congregational Singing in an Archdiocese,” 417-419.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁴⁰⁵ Boyle, “Congregational Singing in an Archdiocese,” 417. Italics added.

chant classes for priests, one priest from each parish to attend, again for the purpose of returning to teach their own congregations.

This same Fr. Boyle, however, gave quite a different account of the *national* Catholic picture only a few years earlier, in 1933, for the thirtieth birthday of the *motu proprio*. In the pages of *America*, Boyle stirred up a huge controversy by wondering aloud why so few were actually singing in church, and he laid down a blistering challenge to Catholic America: “Shall the people sing the Mass? Shall the Religious sing the Mass? Shall college students sing the Mass? Shall children sing the Mass?” he jabbed relentlessly, and then finished by bluntly laying the blame with the commissions: “Music Commissions look well in the ‘Catholic Directory.’ *Do they mean anything?*”⁴⁰⁶

3.2.4.2 *Massed Choirs*

Probably the most striking visible sign of the influence of the *motu proprio* during its lifetime was the periodic holding of massed-choir events, generally sponsored by individual dioceses. Normally these were held as demonstrations and rallying-points for the work done in response to *TLS*; if the event were a Mass, for example, thousands would join in the unison singing of a plainsong mass. Gerald Ellard lists five such typical events occurring during a six-month period, all in 1937:

Baltimore, May 16: 1200 pupils of Seton High School sang their annual pontifical High Mass in the cathedral.

⁴⁰⁶ Letter to the Editor, “For Motu Proprio’s Thirtieth Birthday,” *America*, 2 December 1933, 213. Italics added.

Newark, May 31: 6200 children, of 168 schools, sang High Mass, broadcast over NBC, at their fourth annual demonstration of the kind.

Cleveland, late August: 3000 pupils sang High Mass in Public Hall at the CSMC Convention: seven bishops assisted, ten thousand people.

St. Louis, October 9: 2000 children sang High Mass at the cathedral as part of the catechetical Convention program.

Nashville, October 19: 2000 children sang field Mass at the Centenary of the Church in Tennessee.⁴⁰⁷

Of all the dioceses in the US, it would appear that Newark, N.J., under the direction of its Bishop (later Archbishop) Thomas J. Walsh, was the most fervent in its endeavors for TLS. Newark in any event did not shy away from publicity; several articles in *The Catholic Choirmaster* from the mid-1930s feature Diocesan massed-choir events,⁴⁰⁸ and *Caecilia* ran two lengthy features in 1950 which covered the whole history of Newark's impressive musical initiatives.⁴⁰⁹ Three tables from the *Caecilia* articles give a sense of the scope of the work.⁴¹⁰ Photographs from these and similar events bring to life the evident spectacles they must have been, and a sense of ethos of worship and orderliness that now seem products of a bygone age. Nor was Newark unique. Fr. Hugh Boyle in San Francisco had 50,000 chanting in Gregorian at Benediction in 1934,⁴¹¹ and 60,000 singing hymns at

⁴⁰⁷ Ellard, "Open- or Closed-shop Choirs," 155.

⁴⁰⁸ See e.g. "The Fourth Annual Demonstration of Liturgical Music," CAT 23 (1937) 59-61; "Historic Event in the Archdiocese of Newark," CAT 24 (1938) 93-98. See Appendix D.

⁴⁰⁹ See CEC 77 no. 6 (Sept-Oct 1950), virtually the entire issue.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 243, 286, 271.

⁴¹¹ Bularzik, "Gregorian Chant in its Liturgical Setting," 169.

an outdoor Christ the King celebration in 1937.⁴¹² An astonishing 70,000 children chanted the *Missa de Angelis* at the 1926 Chicago Eucharistic Congress.⁴¹³ There was awareness of both the promise and pitfalls of these massed-events. Given the many stops and starts, the earlier ones – perhaps the Chicago Congress is an example here – seemed to some to be more “flash occasions” that “[recede] all too soon into a period of darkness leaving the anxious sighing for the better, and the indifferent caring as little as before.”⁴¹⁴ Others, even bishops, did not seem to grasp the connection to *congregational* participation, Archbishop E. D. Howard commenting in 1934 that

The value of training so great a concourse of children will not be sufficiently appreciated until these children are grown up and form the nucleus of *well-trained liturgical choirs* in countless parishes, of this and other dioceses.⁴¹⁵

Others, however, while understanding the need to avoid empty show, saw the potential of massed-choir events in realizing the participative goals of the *motu proprio*. Bishop McLaughlin of Paterson, NJ charged his diocesan school children in 1945: “[U]nless you who participate bring back to your parishes the lessons of this divine service today, we shall have only an empty demonstration *without influence upon our people as a whole*.”⁴¹⁶ Newark showed its own faithfulness to the goals of *TLS*:

⁴¹² Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 155.

⁴¹³ Bularzik, “Gregorian Chant in its Liturgical Setting,” 169.

⁴¹⁴ Cyr de Brant, “Pius X: The Turning of the Tide,” CAT 37 (1951) 51.

⁴¹⁵ OFW 8 no. 9 (28 July 1934) 420, quoted in Ellard, “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 155. Italics added.

⁴¹⁶ McLaughlin, “A Bishop Speaks on the Vox Populi,” 103. Italics added.

Seventeen years of activity in this particular field of Catholic Action has developed a certain assurance among the choristers; there is never the slightest sign of nervousness or hesitancy and there is a sublime faith in their ability to surpass the efforts of the year preceding. They are made to appreciate the fact that Pope Pius X *requested their active participation* in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. *They are conscious of the fact that they are leaders in the movement for Congregational Singing.*⁴¹⁷

While these occasional massed events were on the order of spectacles,⁴¹⁸ they were based on “that gentle and solid advance that in the end assures success”:⁴¹⁹ the ongoing, “silent” and often heroic labors of those in the field of education. It is to this foundational factor for the life of *TLS* that we now turn.

⁴¹⁷ “Concerning the Preparation of the Annual Concerts,” CEC 77 no. 6 (Sept-Oct 1949) 268. Italics added.

⁴¹⁸ See Plates III (a-b), pp. 294-5.

⁴¹⁹ Cyr de Brant, “Pius X: The Turning of the Tide,” 51.



Aerial view of Soldiers' Field, Grant Park, on Monday morning, June 21st, when 62,000 parochial school children sang the "Mass of the Angels."

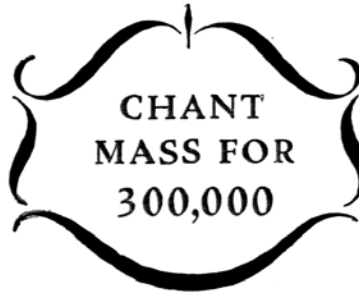
Plate III-a. "Chant Mass for 300,000,"
Chicago Tribune, June 22, 1926.

From The Chicago Tribune of Tuesday, June 22, 1926

THEY are idols of hearts and of households,
 They are angels of God in disguise;
 His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
 His glory still gleams in their eyes;
 Oh, these truants from home and from heaven,
 They have made me more manly and mild!
 And I know now how Jesus could liken
 The kingdom of God to a child.
 CHARLES MONROE DICKINSON
 ("The Children"; 1889.)

Soldiers' Field Rites Epochal in Church Annals By James O'Donnell Bennett

AN altar, twelve ecclesiastical thrones,
 150,000 worshipers, nearly half of them
 singing children in white.
 Such the congregation.
 The flag of the republic and the cross
 of the church over all.



Such the spirit.

Thus did the lovely Mass of the Angels
 celebrated by the Catholic church yesterday
 morning on Soldiers' field become as
 much a rite of community and of country
 as a rite of the church. It was a coming
 together, indeed, of churchmen but it was
 likewise a consecration by and of citizens.

It transcended creed and became a universal
 song and oblation that touched and
 thrilled all hearts of what faith soever.

TEMPLE CANOPIED BY HEAVEN

It came to pass in the busy, feverish fast
 beating heart of the fourth city of the
 modern world, and it took from commerce
 and traffic and trade three of its valued
 hours.

But it said something alike to devotee
 and to trader, and the city paused to listen.
 At the water gate of Chicago the church
 set up her temple. Its roof was the gray
 sky, low hung with scudding clouds driven
 lakeward by a westerly wind and bringing
 once a few drops of rain.

Its sheltering walls were the graystone
 cliffs of the Doric stadium.

Such was this cathedral of all outdoors.

The Doric cliffs bounded it on the east
 and west. Its open end to the north had
 the background of the Ionic colonnade of
 the Field museum. Nearly half a mile to
 the south the tremendous perspective
 ended in hangings of white and yellow—
 the papal colors—surmounted by staffs
 carrying gigantic flags of all nations.

Such the setting.

MORE THAN 300,000 IN THRONG

Pressing from all points of the compass
 upon this mighty throng of 150,000 in the

Plate III-b. "Chant Mass for 300,000,"
 Chicago Tribune, June 22, 1926.

3.2.5 Education

"A noble effort"

The educational initiatives spawned by *Tra le sollecitudini* could form an entire dissertation in themselves. At every level – seminary, college, teacher training institutes, secondary and grammar schools – a variety of responses were awakened by the *motu proprio*. Whether the project was understood primarily to be developing "good Church music" or congregational participation, the "answer" was universally taken to lie in education. The *motu proprio* itself of course deals with education in the penultimate "chief

means” section, notably focusing the bulk of its attention on seminary matters, the support and founding of “higher schools of Church music,” and the (perhaps idealistic?) restoration of “ancient choir schools,” even in small parishes. The laity are only mentioned in this latter venue, “an easy means of gathering together both children and grown-up people to their profit and the edification of the parish.”⁴²⁰ Pius XI was more explicit in *Divini cultus sanctitatem*, addressing lengthy sections to training of clergy (“brief but almost daily reading and practice of Gregorian chant and sacred music”) but noting in the end that “The efforts of both secular and regular clergy . . . should be devoted to the instruction of their people in liturgical music, since this is so closely connected with Christian doctrine. *This will best be accomplished by readily teaching Gregorian chant in the schools, pious sodalities and other liturgical associations.*”⁴²¹

3.2.5.1 Hope for TLS

In the US, hopes for success of the *motu proprio* (particularly in congregational singing) seemed especially to be pinned on the children, more and more so as time went on. “The Church has always recognized,” intoned AER in the time-honored phrase, “as a

⁴²⁰ Hayburn, 231

⁴²¹ Hayburn, 331 (italics added). Pius XII to no surprise later echoed his predecessors, here through the words of Msgr. Montini: “In order that such useful initiative may continue to grow, it is necessary that sacred chant *be methodically taught everywhere to children, beginning with the years of primary school . . .*” (Letter to Giuseppe Cardinal Pizzardo, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, in CEC 81 no. 3 [Mar-April 1954] 92. Italics added.) Even after the Second Council, voices continued to be raised around this issue, here Msgr. Richard Schuler in 1967: “A future age will judge us harshly on this score. It is in education that the secret to successful singing by the faithful lies, and this does not mean a mere ten or fifteen minutes rehearsal before Mass, as a very high body recently recommended on the subject of musical education. It means a frank re-organization of music in our whole school system . . .” (“Congregation: Its Possibilities,” 329)

fundamental principle that in order to inculcate its teachings thoroughly, instruction should begin with the little children.”

There is no reason why an exception should be made in the study of chant. Why not have the study of plain song go hand in hand with the child’s experience in secular music. This is the surest and safest method whereby the faithful will become Gregorian chant-minded.⁴²²

Over time, the notoriously recalcitrant adult American laity were showing that “not every one has the aptitude for [Gregorian chant] in later years,”⁴²³ and that the time to strike was early:

What the children do not get in elementary and high school music is lost forever . . . the logical time, the drill time, the simple, interesting, and impressionable time is over. Limited music, or no music in the school means that the pupils must and will look for it elsewhere.⁴²⁴

Even prior to *TLS*, as early as the Second Council of Baltimore,⁴²⁵ and again at the Third Council, it was decreed in the US to be “most desirable that the rudiments of Gregorian chant should be taught in the primary school so that by degrees the greater part of the people could take part in the choral services of the Church.”⁴²⁶ Eventually, children were recognized as the *sine qua non*:

If the *Motu Proprio* is to be carried out, it can *only* be done by beginning in our Catholic schools, for the children represent our future congregations. To begin in seminaries and novitiates is to

⁴²² J. Fischer and Brother, “The Gregorian Chant Manual of the Catholic Hour,” *AER* 94 (1936), 79-80.

⁴²³ “The Recent American Congress for the Reform of Church Music,” *AER* 63 (1920) 113-125, here 124.

⁴²⁴ Clement McNaspy, SJ, “Our Daily Musical Bread,” *CEC* 79 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1951) 8-9, here 9.

⁴²⁵ See above, pp. 178-9.

⁴²⁶ Stockley, “The Mind of Rome in Church Music,” 427.

begin too late. God must receive the worship due to Him. The seed must be planted in childhood . . . ⁴²⁷

In the early years following the *motu proprio*, a great champion of the cause of education in the US emerged in the figure of Justine Bayard Ward. Vocal advocate of Gregorian chant, friend and supporter of Solesmes and particularly Dom André Mocquereau, Ward's life and work are well documented.⁴²⁸ She had the financial means (if not perhaps the collegial disposition) to make an enduring institutional impact in the founding of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in Purchase, New York, the School of Sacred Music at Catholic University, and in decades of influence in educational systems nationwide. Ward's efforts too were directed primarily toward the formation of grade-school children and their teachers, always for a faithful carrying-out of the provisions of *TLS*. Quoting the Archbishop of New Orleans in an early CAT piece, Ward writes "Thus, in the Parochial schools lies the solution of the entire problem. *It is the best, if not the only way, of reaching a permanent and effective reform.*"⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ Sister M. Millicent, CSA, "Learning the New Song," 45 (italics added). Note the late date (1954) of this plea.

⁴²⁸ Catherine Dower, "Patrons of the Arts. The Wards: Justine and George. Symbolic Illusions," in Skeris, ed., *Cum Angelis Canere*, 145-179; Pierre Combe, *Justine Ward and Solesmes* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987); Catherine A. Carroll, *A History of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music* (St. Louis, MO: Society of the Sacred Heart, 1989).

⁴²⁹ Justine Ward, "Music in the Parochial Schools," CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 6-8, here 8 (italics added). Ward echoed this assessment in her own words: "In my judgment, the study of music in our Parochial schools, if intelligently conceived and carried out, would be the first step toward a constructive reform, both of Church music and of public taste. Our Catholic people must be taught to sing and to know good music from bad." *Ibid.*, 6.

3.2.5.2 *The Picture in 1953*

A reliable source from this period is happily available to us for insight into *TLS* and education, that being the three-year (1951-53) “major survey” of US Catholic schools sponsored by the National Catholic Music Educators Association (NCMEA). The survey was conducted by Rev. Cletus Madsen, chair of the NCMEA's Liturgical Music “wing,” who published a synopsis of his committee's results in *Worship* in 1953.⁴³⁰ That synopsis will form the basis of our comments here, filled out with pertinent additional details from the current literature.

The general evaluation of progress in music education taken in most quarters around that time yielded, not unexpectedly, a mixed picture. On the positive side, there was the sense that by *TLS*'s golden anniversary, the “tide had been turned, the “groundwork had been laid” in Catholic schools, and, after long effort, enthusiasm was growing.⁴³¹ The NCMEA was in its “hey-day,” a vibrant organization which strove energetically through conventions, teacher training institutes and its journal *Musart* to promote not only music education but the ideals of the *motu proprio*. On the negative side, there was awareness of how *slow* progress had been – *TLS* had had to elbow its way in, to *fight* “for a hearing in choirloft [sic] after choirloft, in schools of elementary, secondary and

⁴³⁰ “Fifty Years After,” *OFW* 27 no.12 (November 1953) 564-6. Complete synopsis is included at Appendix G.

⁴³¹ See e.g. Cyr de Brant, “Pius X: The Turning of the Tide”; Boyle, “Congregational Singing in an Archdiocese”; Rev. Cletus Madsen, “To Pray in Beauty,” *Musart* 6 no. 3 (Jan 1954) 10.

college levels, in novitiates and seminaries”⁴³² – and moreover, of how huge was the amount that remained to be done.

Elementary Schools

It was in Catholic parochial grade schools that Madsen's survey found “the greatest advance in the past few years”:

More and more schools are introducing courses of study that teach all the children to sing and many are trying to integrate these courses with liturgical music and religion courses in general.⁴³³

The huge diocesan demonstration masses⁴³⁴ were of course only made possible by the coordinated efforts of many individual schools. Numerous accounts of 50th anniversary celebrations of *TLS* from all over the nation demonstrated that the schools had been far from dormant.⁴³⁵ The vast majority of the work being done with children was carried on by “Our Devoted Sisters,”⁴³⁶ and various teaching orders of nuns claimed particular success in their various schools.⁴³⁷ Within some dioceses certain orders of Religious even staged large mass-demonstrations of their own, such as the Gregorian Mass sung by 600

⁴³² Madsen, “To Pray in Beauty,” 10.

⁴³³ Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” 565.

⁴³⁴ See prior section, “Diocesan Leadership.”

⁴³⁵ For a representative nation-wide survey see “National Notes,” *Musart* 6 no. 2 (November 1953) 20-29.

⁴³⁶ See appreciative editorial of Rev. Richard Ginder, “Our Devoted Sisters,” *CAT* 38 (1952) 2.

⁴³⁷ See e.g. the account of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary in Hudson, NH, in Beatrice A. Belisle, Letter to the Editor, *America*, 10 March 1934, p. 552. Fr. Boyle however insisted that as a general rule, “The good Sisters have no time to instruct the young in the art of Gregorian Chant.” “For Motu Proprio’s Thirtieth Birthday,” 213.

Milwaukee students of the School Sisters of Notre Dame.⁴³⁸ Certain dioceses as well were especially conscientious about promoting the goals of *TLS* in the schools, the Archbishop of New Orleans urging early on that

During the grammar grades, it is then possible to master thoroughly, and even memorize, an entire repertoire of church music, the masses, vespers, psalms, and hymns. . . . In this way, we will have prepared in a few years an unending supply of available material for choirs, nor is this all, for, as the children of today become the congregation of tomorrow, we will have provided, not only choirs, but that congregational singing so earnestly desired by the Holy Father.⁴³⁹

In Cleveland, for the observance of the 50th anniversary of *TLS*, *every parish* was expected to offer High Mass on November 22, to be sung by the children or the congregation.⁴⁴⁰

A great deal of curricular material was developed for teaching Catholic grade-school music along the lines of the *motu proprio*. Justine Ward's own series began to appear as early as 1916, "the first attempt on the part of earnest educators to provide a systematically arranged course of music study for the parochial schools which is truly Catholic in every sense of the word."⁴⁴¹ By 1946 the Ward Method had found its way into forty-six states

⁴³⁸ *Musart* 6 no. 5 (April 1954) 37.

⁴³⁹ Ward, "Music in the Parochial Schools," 8. See the impressive set of policies for music in the schools of the Archdiocese of New Orleans in Very Rev. Henry C. Bezou, "Music in the Schools," *CEC* 79 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1951) 5, 9.

⁴⁴⁰ See *Musart* 6 no. 2 (November 1953) 8. Bishop Boyle of Pittsburgh, in addition to sponsoring a strong Music Commission (see above, 123-4), wrote of the importance of music in *Plainchant for Elementary Schools*:

"Assuming, as pedagogy does assume, that the study of music forms, in its measure, the mind and character of the student, it is worth asking what kind of music, what kind of mind, and what kind of character are desirable and harmonize best with one another. This book answers that a Catholic mind, a Catholic character, and the music which developed with the acts of worship and of prayer in the ancient faith of Christendom are desirable and work best together for the making of the Christian adult life." (Ellard, "Open- or Closed-shop Choirs," 159.)

⁴⁴¹ Review, "The Catholic Education Course," *CAT* 2 no. 3 (July 1916) 22.

and nine Provinces in Canada.⁴⁴² Many other series were published, booksellers perhaps awakening to the potential size of this Catholic “market.”⁴⁴³ Over time, curricular norms began to take shape: in 1951 the School Sisters of St. Francis from Alverno College in Milwaukee published a primary-grade “Alverno Gregorian Chant Lesson Plan”⁴⁴⁴ and in 1954 the Archdiocese of Milwaukee itself followed with a complete graded outline in Gregorian chant for the elementary schools.⁴⁴⁵ Around the same time the NCMEA proposed a similar “Blueprint,” attempting to establish unified national standards for grade schools.⁴⁴⁶ Encouraging articles regularly appeared, touting the possibilities of success with children and chant.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴² N.a., “Summer School of Liturgical Music,” *AER* 74 (1926) 626-8.

⁴⁴³ See Plate IV, p. 303.

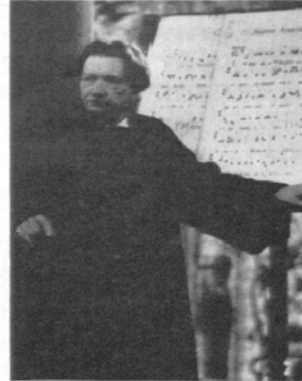
⁴⁴⁴ School Sisters of Saint Francis, Alverno, Milwaukee, “Alverno Gregorian Chant Lesson Plan,” *CEC* 78 no. 6 (Sept-Oct 1951) 245-7, 251.

⁴⁴⁵ *CEC* 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 46-8. [Appendix E].

⁴⁴⁶ Rev. Cletus P. Madsen, “To Pray in Beauty. Report of Gregorian Chant Committee of the NCMEA,” *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* 5 no. 1 (August 1952) 10-11.

⁴⁴⁷ E.g. Sister Richard Ann, SC, “Can Children Read Chant?” *Musart* 6 no. 5 (April 1954) 7, 48-50. [Plate V, p. 305].

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Plate IV.
"Chant on Charts,"

Catholic Music Educators Bulletin 6 no. 1 (September 1953) 19.

One of the problems at the elementary level however was the growing number of Catholic children attending public schools. In 1952 more than one-quarter of infants born in the US were baptized Roman Catholic, yet of these more than half eventually attended public schools.⁴⁴⁸ As CCD-time was precious during the school year, the solution for music training was seen to be religious vacation schools each summer.⁴⁴⁹ Though impressive results were sometimes achieved (3,000 children chanted the solemn plainsong Mass for the Pius X School summer session in New York⁴⁵⁰), upon returning to their parishes “where there is a Catholic school, public school children [were] completely relegated to the sidelines, their appetite for participation in religious music sharpened but not satisfied by the taste of it they have had during the weeks of summer school.”⁴⁵¹

Other problems existed within the Catholic school system. An already “certainly over-crowded” curriculum often left music with no place. Thus even in “model” dioceses, certain bishops, here for example Ritter of Indianapolis, found it necessary in Pastoral letters to

reaffirm our opinion: that the subject [of music] is an essential part of the curricula and no less important than other courses of study . . . The Bulletin of Regulations issued by the [Church Music] Commission is in force, and it would be well for every pastor and assistant to have a copy at hand . . .⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁸ Rev. Thomas S. Hansberry, “Hymns on Vacation,” CAT 38 (1952) 53.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 53ff.

⁴⁵⁰ N.a., “Summer School of Liturgical Music,” 627.

⁴⁵¹ Hansberry, “Hymns on Vacation,” 55.

⁴⁵² Joseph E. Ritter, “Letter to the Pastors,” CAT 23 (1937) 194.

Can Children Read Chant?

by Sister Richard Ann, S.C.

"They're only children. Surely you can't expect them to read Gregorian chant. Why, that's for priests and seminarians. I couldn't do it myself." We've all heard those sentiments at some time or other. Of course they're children, but they *can* do it—if we teach them and keep them interested. "Nothing succeeds like success." Children who aren't too sure that they want to learn something new brighten up visibly when they discover that they can do it, and each little evidence of accomplishment brings forth another spurt of effort.

Interest is Created

Some don't have to be given reasons for learning; others do. But doesn't the teacher of geography or English or arithmetic meet the same situation? Most children don't come to school begging to be taught the parts of speech; the teacher's aim is to try to create an atmosphere of interest—and so with the chant.

One ten-year-old who had never been exposed to Gregorian chant until this year came to his teacher one day after school with a *Kyrie* in his hand. "Sister," he said, "I can sight read the Credo." Of course, Sister was delighted. "Let me hear you," she answered. With the air of a professional he closed the book and began to sing Credo III from memory! But he had worked it out for himself in his spare time, and even though he made some mistakes, he had gained much. That boy was an unusual case, but many who merely exist through a session of chant taught by rote will respond to the challenge of attempting something new, and incidentally, developing a skill which they didn't know they possessed.

One strongly suspects that those who object so vigorously to teaching children to read chant have never tried it themselves. It is not the proverbial bed of roses, but what worth-while teaching is? If our chil-

dren can read modern music they can read chant. And if they can't read either, they can be taught to do so. The situation reminds one of the little girl whose new piano teacher asked, "And can you read at sight, Mary?" "Oh, yes," said Mary confidently, "but not at *first* sight!"

Probably Mary stumbled through a new reading exercise the way we sometimes hear groups of children painfully picking out the notes of a new song while the teacher beats upon the desk with a stick. Someone might profitably remind her of what the Mad Hatter said about Time: "He won't stand beating." But the beating goes on and the children wobble uncertainly from note to note with an utter disregard of the form of the composition until the teacher's patience is exhausted and the children's attitude toward a music class is one of complete disgust.

Just what is the bugbear which strikes terror into so many at the mere thought of teaching children to read Gregorian chant? If we were to boil down all the objections, we

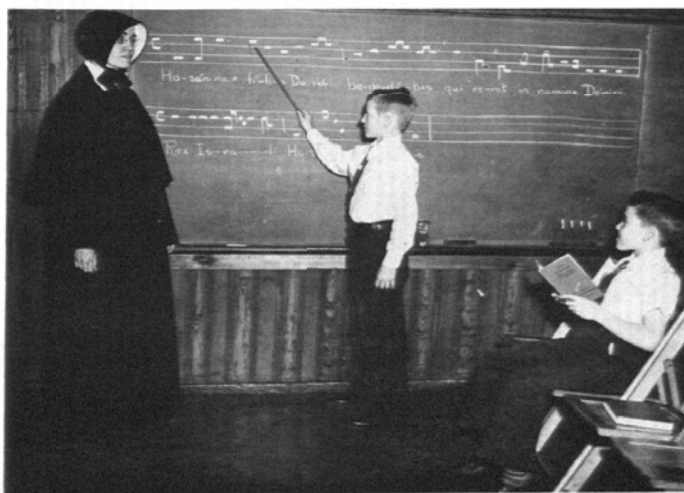
would probably find that it is merely a lack of familiarity with the picture presented by chant notation. For, whether you believe this or not, it is true: Gregorian chant is much more easily read than modern music. If your pupils can read round notes fairly well, they will have little or no trouble reading square ones.

Teach Chant Notation

First of all, the melodic line of Gregorian chant is often nearly diatonic in character. The intervals employed are usually small; many minor and quite a few major thirds, a sprinkling of fourths, occasional fifths, and somewhat rarely, sixths. The melodies move quietly and without chromatics, with the single exception of the flatted *ti*, or *te*.

Are you guilty of having raised your eyebrows at the reference to square notes? I am firmly convinced that Gregorian chant is best taught and understood if the approach is made through its own notation. There is nothing so discouraging and

(Continued on page 48)



APRIL, 1954

7

Plate V.
"Can Children Read Chant?"
Musart 6 no. 5 (April 1954) 7, 48-50.

Many teachers in any event were themselves poorly equipped to teach music and chant.⁴⁵³

Other teachers, it was found, concentrated on “cramming many, many theoretical Chant facts” into youngsters’ heads, giving them precious little experience in actually *singing* the chant – leading Sister M. Millicent, CSA, to admonish that it was necessary not only to promote *knowledge* of chant, but also *love* for it.

The Madsen survey concluded that in spite of much good news at this level, there was plenty of room for improvement: “. . .[O]ur survey seems to indicate that *over half of the grade schools of the country* still handle this matter rather haphazardly.”⁴⁵⁴ Fr. Boyle offers a more incisive account:

Shall the children sing the Mass? Children love the chant, and I know this from experience . . . These children will [instead] be taught a few ditties with sacred texts. The same ditties composed by “one of our Order.” The good Sisters have no time to instruct the young in the art of Gregorian Chant. I have read over some of the courses of study for our parish-school children: songs of birds, flowers, and insects, but not one hymn of merit, and as a rule no hymn at all. . .
.⁴⁵⁵

Secondary Schools

It was at the secondary level where progress in liturgical music seemed to halt. The Madsen survey concludes

Here the situation is woeful indeed. Very little evidence has been found to indicate the teaching of liturgical music or, in fact, of any

⁴⁵³ (see below, Training Institutes).

⁴⁵⁴ Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” 565. Italics added.

⁴⁵⁵ Boyle, “For Motu Proprio’s Thirtieth Birthday,” 213.

music . . . The situation is better in girls' schools than in co-ed set-ups and practically nothing is done in boys' schools.⁴⁵⁶

In 1954 the NCMEA concentrated its efforts specifically on the “high school problem”:

“i.e., why does our liturgical music program fall down at the high school level[?]”⁴⁵⁷ A critical sociological factor played in here: of Catholic young people who went to high school by the early 1950s, over three-quarters attended public schools. But even within the Catholic schools, a chasm formed: “The splendid work of the Sisters in the grade school is often nullified by the attitude taken in the high school toward courses in chant.”⁴⁵⁸ One priest even regretted the overlooked value of chant in high schools, not only liturgically but as a means of addressing perennial teen problems:

When will our high schools begin to use the chant to help boys and girls in their adolescent years to grow in Christian virtue and prepare for the temptations of adult age? Is participation in popular music and in football and school yells the only kind of participation of which our young people are capable?⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶ Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” 565-6 (italics added). Fr. Francis Schmitt of Boys Town mournfully reports the dearth of singing Catholic males by the 1950's: NCMEA demonstrations where 15 boys are outnumbered by 200 girls, convention clinics where all the performers are female, etc., to say nothing of the parish practice of “grooming” teen-age girls to play the organ, on the cheap. “All I know is that no one had better blame the boys. . . . White boys like to sing, colored boys like to sing, and so do the Mexicans and Chinese. Most of the Chinese are Bass, the Mexicans tenor, the Negroes varied baritone, and the white kids sopranos . . . All-state tackles and fullbacks like to sing; boxing champions and track men like to sing. Little politicians, little gamblers like to sing. They will if you let them . . .” (“Boy-Choir and Its Repertoire,” 106.)

⁴⁵⁷ Madsen, “To Pray in Beauty,” *Musart* 6 no. 3 (Jan 1954) 10. One result of these efforts was a proposed outline for music in Catholic Secondary Schools, developed at CUA in 1954. See CEC 81 no. 6 (Sept-Oct 1954) 234-5.

⁴⁵⁸ Herman, “Homely Hints,” 270.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Though of course many isolated instances of impressive music work in the high schools were to be found,⁴⁶⁰ by and large it was not taken as important that “It is these young people, properly trained, who will give to the chant and congregational singing the zest and earnest participation which will make the liturgy ‘the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit.’”⁴⁶¹

Colleges and Universities

The Madsen survey:

Here too there is very little in a general way, so little in fact that our surveys proved useless when it came to making tabulations. Some valiant attempts are being made and some splendid results are observable in certain colleges for women, but this is largely counterbalanced by the almost total absence of such activity in the men's colleges.⁴⁶²

These results seem born out in the journal literature. Women's colleges regularly write in with impressive stories, such as Marywood College of Scranton, PA, where the entire student body annually sang the Commencement Mass, including the entire proper, in Gregorian chant.⁴⁶³ At St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, the college required an hour a week devoted to chant, and the student body and Sisters sang the Ordinary every Sunday

⁴⁶⁰ Ellard cites the annual Seton High School Pontifical High Mass at the Cathedral of Baltimore, sung by 1200 students in 1937. See also, e.g., the entry for Columbus, Ohio in the national 1953 celebrations of TLS, involving 500 students from 22 high schools singing chant (*Musart* 6 no. 2 [Nov 1953] 28). But note of the 20 cities cited, only this one featured a High School chorus.

⁴⁶¹ Herman, “Homely Hints,” 270.

⁴⁶² Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” 566.

⁴⁶³ Kathryn Hair, “Marywood's Record” (Letter to the Editor), *CAT* 20 (1934) 37.

while alternating weekly the Proper of the Mass.⁴⁶⁴ Examples even exist of entire student bodies singing three-part masses and motets with Falso Bordone Propers.⁴⁶⁵

College courses in Gregorian chant grew from the 1930s. While some women's colleges (e.g. The St. Mary College, Leavenworth, Kansas⁴⁶⁶) offered credit for single courses, others (as at Assumption College, Worcester, MA) developed complete three-year accredited courses in chant.⁴⁶⁷ Co-ed institutions and music conservatories developed chant courses as well, as at Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, the College of Music of Cincinnati, Duquesne University, and even secular institutions such as Western Reserve University in Cleveland and Louisiana State University (fascinatingly, a legacy of Huey Long.)⁴⁶⁸ By the early 1950s both the Catholic University of America and the University of Notre Dame were offering Bachelor of Music degrees with majors in liturgical music (CUA in fact offering Master's and Doctoral degrees in the discipline.)⁴⁶⁹

Novitiates and Institutes

By the time of *Divini cultus sanctitatem*, it had become clear that “To accomplish all these things for which We hope there is a great need of a large number of skilled teachers.”

⁴⁶⁴ Marie Lauck, “Even on ‘Prom’ Sunday,” *America*, 31 March 1934, 624. They were proud too of devoutly singing the Mass on “Prom Sunday” – “after dancing until midnight . . .”

⁴⁶⁵ See “College Misericordia” and “College Students Sing Liturgical Music at Field Mass,” CAT 24 (1938) 101.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴⁶⁷ See CEC 81 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1953) 39.

⁴⁶⁸ See summary by Gerald Ellard in “Open- or Closed-shop Choirs,” 154-5. On Huey Long, see John LaFarge, “Liturgical Aspects of the Late Huey Long,” *America*, 17 October 1936, 35.

⁴⁶⁹ CEC 81 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1953) 39-40.

In this connection We assign due praise to certain Schools and Institutes, founded here and there throughout the Catholic world, which are training competent instructors by carefully imparted knowledge of the subject in question.⁴⁷⁰

The need for teacher-training fueled a vigorous response in the US, probably the most successful overall reaction to the *motu proprio* within the field of education. At this time teaching in Catholic institutions was largely carried on by Religious, and the Madsen survey in regard to Novitiates is telling:

Here again the scene is rapidly changing. Whereas a few years ago only a relatively few communities included liturgical music in their curricula, today . . . practically all of them do to some extent. Many have special sessions with well-known teachers from the outside and over half of the communities are either instructing their novices in methods of teaching liturgical music in their schools or are planning to do so in the immediate future.⁴⁷¹

Only twenty years earlier, Fr. Edgar Boyle had fumed, “Shall the Religious sing the Mass? How many of our convents do? I speak here of mother houses, where the postulants, novices, and the more gifted Sisters reside. Where does the difficulty lie?”⁴⁷² Sister Millicent, CSA later acknowledged that in a time “not too long past . . . such [chant] courses were not offered, and therefore, many of our 'pioneer' teachers did not receive an adequate training to teach Chant.”⁴⁷³ But by 1953, a new NCMEA survey “Chant in Novitiates” found that “the majority of Motherhouses in this country today offer a Chant

⁴⁷⁰ DCS 11. Hayburn, 332.

⁴⁷¹ Madsen, “Fifty Years After,” 565.

⁴⁷² “For Motu Proprio’s Thirtieth Birthday,” 213.

⁴⁷³ “Learning the New Song,” 44.

course to their novices,”⁴⁷⁴ and a noted organist was able to reflect that “in the last 20 years . . . notable progress has been made, due largely to the efforts of the directors of music in our seminaries and in the religious communities by preparing their members to teach the pupils of our parochial, high schools, and colleges a knowledge and appreciation of good church music.”⁴⁷⁵

Training for religious and lay teachers of liturgical music, as well as parish musicians, took place in a variety of venues, the most popular being the Summer Institutes. The Pius X School at Manhattanville was one of the earliest and best known, long directed by the redoubtable Mother Georgia Stevens, RSCJ and staffed by some very prominent names.⁴⁷⁶ Some of these New York sessions were attended by over twenty religious orders, and the aims were kept broad and two-fold: “first, to train musicians and non-musicians in the Justine Ward Method of Teaching Music and in Gregorian Chant; secondly, to provide students who have little or no musical background with a thorough knowledge of the basic principles of theory and practice.”⁴⁷⁷ The Pius X School also conducted Summer Sessions at CUA, and Mother Stevens would hold three-week intensive courses at various convents around the nation.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ Sister Millicent, CSA, “Learning the New Song,” 44.

⁴⁷⁵ J. Alfred Schehl, “Reminiscences of Fifty Years,” 37.

⁴⁷⁶ See “Summer Sessions Prove Vitality of the Liturgical Movement,” CAT 20 (1934) 146.

⁴⁷⁷ N.a., “Summer School of Liturgical Music,” 627.

⁴⁷⁸ “Summer Sessions Prove Vitality of the Liturgical Movement,” 146-7.

taxation, these patrons who served the cause of music so long have made a disappearing act—along with their surpluses.

Since the Federal Government now absorbs a major portion of this surplus personal income which once supported the arts, it is arguable that the Federal Government should also assume the responsibility of art patronage which has historically belonged to the possessor of the surplus.

Neither the National Symphony Orchestra, nor any other orchestra in the United States can exist without financial help. Nor can we change the special economic and financial trends on which the country seems so firmly embarked. If the financial policies of our Government slowly dry up the sources of private giving, and if the charitable foundations of the country take little interest in supporting music, then some time in the not too distant future, our orchestras must turn to the Government as the only source of help that is left to them.

However, I don't think anyone would prefer Government subsidies if more support for music could come from the only source left with the possibility of a surplus, small as the surplus may be. That surplus is owned by all of us—the general public; and it seems not too much to expect that an enlightened public should assume the privilege of music patronage, and thereby insure its life and growth. Any astute person must realize that music, the greatest and most democratic of the arts, is here to stay, if for no other reason than the acknowledged truth that music exerts a most powerful civilizing influence. When people fully understand and appreciate the indispensable value of music, and that every dollar they invest in music helps build the community and hence a better nation, then they will place music at the very top of their list as a *must* for favorable consideration of patronage. It is this enlightened outlook, *shared by millions* which must come about.

In this picture I have outlined, all of us are directly concerned. Catholics, in particular, must be enlightened to respect and love the arts. The present Catholic attitude and position towards the arts is not only backward and parochial, but I should say, in a state of apathy. I sometimes

(Continued on page 32)

Dom Desrocquettes Featured In Special Series of Lectures

Three Master Sessions Conducted During Summer

The world-renowned spirit and tradition of the Solesmes Abbey, France, was brought to American liturgical musicians this summer by Dom J. Hebert Desrocquettes, O.S.B., noted authority on Church music. His tour was sponsored by the Gregorian Institute of America.

In three five-day master sessions in Chicago, Ill., Hartford, Conn., and Cincinnati, Ohio, nearly 500 classroom teachers, organists and choir-masters heard the famous monk and teacher lecture on *Gregorian Chant—its Technique and Interpretation—its History and Development*. The Chicago session was co-sponsored by the Illinois Unit of the NCMEA.

In other lectures, it is estimated that Dom Desrocquettes imparted the teaching principles of Solesmes to another 3500 people. Among other places, he lectured at Marywood College, Scranton, Pa., under the sponsorship of the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and at the Boston, Mass., Archdiocesan Teachers Institute.

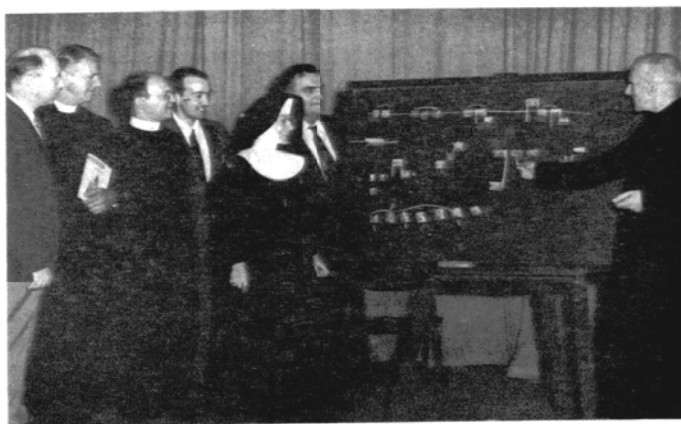
Dom Desrocquettes, a pupil of the eminent Dom Mocquereau, evolved

his famous modal theory of teaching Gregorian Chant while instructing students who came to Solesmes for study and inspiration. In 1925, he was appointed the official choirmaster and organist at Quarr Abbey, Isle of Wight, where part of the Solesmes community remained after the monks were recalled to France after their exile at Quarr.

When, in 1948, the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music requested a chant teacher from Solesmes, Dom Desrocquettes was sent and eventually was appointed a professor of advanced Gregorian chant and accompaniment by the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries.

Lecturing with Dom Desrocquettes on these programs was the Reverend Clifford Howell, S.J., well-known English liturgist, who demonstrated the techniques he has developed in working with lay groups to encourage intelligent and enthusiastic participation in the liturgy of the Church. Father Howell's articles on the liturgy have appeared in many publications.

The Reverend Richard B. Curtin, C.G.L., professor of Church music at St. Joseph Seminary, Yonkers, N. Y., lectured on choral technique and Church laws on music.



At the Chicago session, Dom Desrocquettes demonstrates a fine point of Chant to (left to right) Dr. Clifford Bennett of Gregorian Institute, Father Howell, Rev. Francis Brunner, C.S.R., Robert Carroll, Sister M. Leonette, O.S.F., President of the Illinois Unit of NCMEA, and Ralph Jusko.

• 7 •

Plate VI.
Master Classes: Dom Desrocquettes,
Catholic Music Educators Bulletin 6 no. 1 (September 1953) 7.

Many other institutions followed suit, and were well publicized in the journals. The Gregorian Institute of America, under the direction of its founder Dr. Clifford A. Bennett, held its own summer programs in Toledo, Ohio as well as month-long institutes at such places as St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN and St. Anselm's Abbey, Manchester, NH.⁴⁷⁹ GIA brought prominent names from Europe also to teach five-day “master sessions” around the country.⁴⁸⁰ Prominent colleges and universities offering summer Sessions included Boston College (under Rev. Clement J. McNaspy, SJ), Catholic University (under Rev. Russell Woollen), DePaul University in Chicago (under René Dosogne)⁴⁸¹ and the University of Notre Dame (under Rev. Michael Mathis, CSC).⁴⁸² Music workshops honoring the Jubilee of *TLS* were particularly abundant.⁴⁸³

Venues other than summer institutes were also available, not only for school teachers but in response to the “definite and immediate need of schools for the training of organists and choir directors.”⁴⁸⁴ The GIA under Dr. Bennett offered a correspondence course in chant.⁴⁸⁵ Adult education centers at such places as the University of San

⁴⁷⁹ A survey of the major US summer institutes is at Gregory Ellwood, “Summer Schools,” *CEC* 77 no. 4 (May-June 1950) 157-9.

⁴⁸⁰ Plate VI, p. 312.

⁴⁸¹ Plate VII, p. 314.

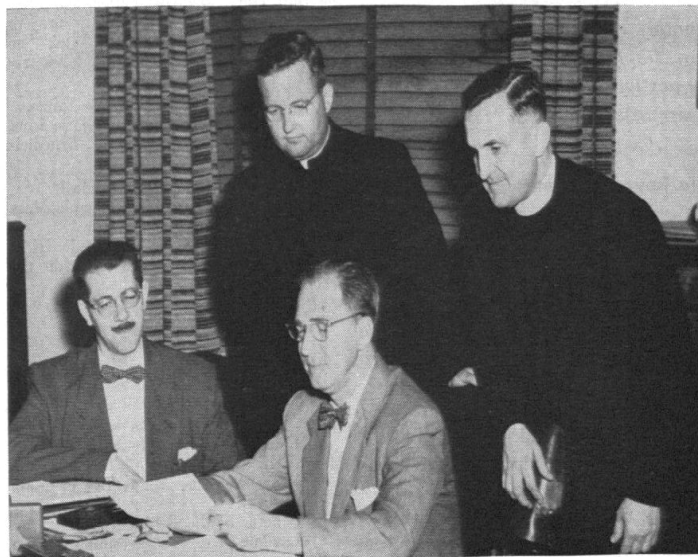
⁴⁸² For synopses of these, see “Summer Schools in Liturgical Music,” *CEC* 78 no. 4 (May-June 1951) 142-4.

⁴⁸³ See n.a., “Music Workshops Honor Jubilee of Motu Proprio,” *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* 6 no. 1 (September 1953) 12-13. [Appendix F]. Also n.a., “Motu Proprio Celebrations,” *CEC* 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 73-4.

⁴⁸⁴ Clement A. Miller, “A Secular Approach to Gregorian Chant and Sacred Polyphony,” 35.

⁴⁸⁵ Schehl, “Reminiscences of Fifty Years,” 37.

DePaul Workshop Provides Opportunity for Performance



The first liturgical workshop sponsored by the School of Music of DePaul University, Chicago, opened on July 3 in the Seventh Floor Recital Hall of the University and closed on August 7.

The Very Reverend Monsignor Joseph T. Kush, of the Institute faculty celebrated the first of six weekly Masses. At these Masses, Workshop students sang, conducted and played organ accompaniments. Thus each student had an opportunity to make functional what had been learned in the classes.

The student body was made up of

SOME members of DePaul University's first Liturgical Workshop faculty. Left to right: Rene Dosogne, Instructor in Chant and Service Playing; the Reverend Lucian Duesing, Instructor in Service Playing and Liturgy; Arthur C. Becker, Dean of the University, and the Very Reverend Monsignor Joseph T. Kush, Instructor in Chant and Chironomy.

clergy, sisters and laymen. One student, the Reverend Carl E. Kurt, pastor of St. John's Church in Clinton, Iowa, traveled 400 miles each week to attend the classes.

Courses offered included Gregorian Chant I and II, Service Playing and Modal Accompaniment I and II, Polyphony and Chironomy.

Many New Programs Reported In Joliet, Illinois, Schools

The newly organized Joliet Catholic Grade School Band, under the direction of Mr. John Ventura, made its debut on May 20. In organizing the band, seventy-five students were selected from five Joliet schools. Selection was made on the results of a music aptitude test previously administered. A Parents Band Club has been organized to aid in the purchase of instruments. Reverend A. J. Sinsky, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, has been appointed Band Moderator.

The Elementary Division sponsored piano auditions for the grade school students on April 26. Sister Ethna Marie, S.S.J., Our Lady Academy, La Grange, was the adjudicator. Forty-eight pupils from 13 schools participated, and silver medals were awarded to those who received high ratings. The highest ranking student from each school participated in the Diocesan Piano Recital at the College of St. Francis on May 10.

The High School Music Festival was held at Joliet Township High School on May 4. Students from all the high schools in the diocese joined in the presentation of a Marian Pageant depicting the life of Our Lady in song and tableau. The pageant was under the direction of Sister Mary Berneta, C.S.A., High School Chairman. Orchestras and bands in the diocese were also part of this program.

Plate VII.

Depaul University Summer Institutes,
Catholic Music Educators Bulletin 5 no. 1 (August 1952) 9.

San Francisco offered courses in chant and liturgy (under the direction of Rev. Robert Hayburn) to “Sisters, organists and singers.”⁴⁸⁶ Diocesan Schools of Sacred Music, as at San Francisco under Fr. Boyle, held various classes and workshops throughout the year.⁴⁸⁷ In the Archdiocese of Boston, where some 34,000 young people had been taught to sing the mass, teachers were required, at the direction of Archbishop Cushing, to spend every other Saturday afternoon studying chant and music pedagogy at Emmanuel College.⁴⁸⁸ The NCMEA held annual conventions offering an impressive array of workshops and faculty in the various phases of liturgical music,⁴⁸⁹ in addition to periodic workshops throughout the year. Individual parishes hosted any number of workshops, primarily aimed at organists and choirmasters themselves.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁶ “New Centers of Church Music,” CEC 81 no. 1 (Nov-Dec 1953) 39.

⁴⁸⁷ “Summer Sessions Prove Vitality of the Liturgical Movement,” 146.

⁴⁸⁸ N.a., “Boston School Pupils Chant the Mass,” CEC 77 no. 4 (May-June 1950) 156. [Plate VIII, p. 316.]

⁴⁸⁹ See Gregory Ellwood, “The NCMEA Convention in Cleveland,” CEC 78 no. 4 (May-June 1951) 161-4.

⁴⁹⁰ See e.g. “Summer Course in Cincinnati,” CAT 1 no.3 (October 1915) 20; also Sister Leonette, “Workshop in Rockford, Illinois Features Ideals of Motu Proprio,” *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* 5 no. 4 (February 1953) 8. [Plate IX, p. 317.]

Boston School Pupils Chant the Mass



His Excellency Richard J. Cushing, D.D., Archbishop of Boston, addressing 2800 parochial school children who sang Pontifical High Mass on May 12, 1950.

From September 1949 to May 1950, sisters teaching music in the parochial schools of the Archdiocese of Boston, spent every other Saturday afternoon at Emmanuel College. There under the direction of Rev. Russell Davis of Boston, and the Misses Margaret Leddy and Gleason of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music in New York, lessons in the theory of Gregorian Chant and instruction in the teaching of it were given to the group of some 500 nuns in attendance.

The courses were organized at the request of His Excellency, Archbishop Cushing, and carried out through the Archdiocesan Bureau of Education under Rt. Rev. Cornelius T. H. Sherlock, Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. Examinations for course credit were given at the end of the year but meanwhile the sisters had an opportunity to put into practise the lessons which they learned by teaching the chant to the children in their schools.

Because of the limited seating capacity of Mechanics Building where the masses were held, a selection of voices had to be made from the 34,000 or more youngsters who had been taught to sing the mass. One group of 2800 elementary school children was chosen from the 171 schools in the archdiocese to sing the mass on May 12th (see picture); another group representing the high schools was chosen to sing the mass on May 19th.

To make sure that the program thus started has a follow-through into the parishes of the archdiocese, His Excellency, the Archbishop, announced that next year he would preside at one mass each week celebrated in a different parish where the children of that parish would sing the entire mass. Also, summer courses are being offered to the sisters, organist and choir directors during August at the Newton College of the Sacred Heart.

Workshop in Rockford, Illinois Features Ideals Of Motu Proprio

by Sister Leonette

Priests, religious, and lay organists of the Rockford Diocese attended the first of a series of Workshops at St. Nicholas Parish, Aurora, Illinois on Sunday, November 23, at 2 p.m. Reverend Elmer Pfeil, director of music at St. Francis Major Seminary, Milwaukee, gave an address, "The Character and Musical Ideals of Blessed Pius X".

Father Pfeil sketched the history of the music of the Church and showed how parallel events in the general history of music—the music of the troubadours, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the rise of Opera and the development of instruments—affected the music of the Church. This secularization and loss of ideal as to what Church music should be led to the reforms of Pius X and his "Motu Proprio" on sacred music. Stress was placed on the fact that the "Motu Proprio" was not an independent, isolated document, but part of the great plan of Pius X "to restore all things in Christ"—a restoration of Christian living through a return to the Eucharist, the heart of the Liturgy.

After the address and discussion the group went to the parish church choir where Sister M. Theophane, O.S.F., M.A., F.A.G.O., of Alverno College, Milwaukee, gave a demonstration of suitable organ music for Christmas. This music was on display and lists were available for all. The afternoon's program concluded with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The liturgical committee, under the guidance of Father Ernest, O.S.B., of Marmion Abbey, has planned a series of four similar workshops for this year. Some phase of the "Motu-Proprio" will be discussed at each workshop and organ and choir materials for various seasons and occasions will be demonstrated and made available. The entire plan is in commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the promulgation of the "Motu Proprio" of Blessed Pius X.

The next meeting will be held in February at which time the new Easter Liturgy will be explained and demonstrated at the Cathedral Church in Rockford, Illinois.



Workshop for Rockford Diocesan Organists, St. Nicholas Church, Aurora, Illinois. Sister M. Theophane, O.S.F., M.A., F.A.G.O., of Alverno College, Milwaukee, demonstrated liturgical music. In the background (left to right) are: Rev. Ernest Schnaus, O.S.B., Rev. Elmer Pfeil, and Rev. Paul Fry.

The Congregation Sings the Mass

700 students representing the grade and high schools in the city of Aurora gathered at St. Mary's Church on Thanksgiving Day to offer a Solemn High Mass. The entire congregation sang the Ordinary of the Mass, Gregorian Mass XV, and the monks of Marmion Abbey sang the Proper. In an effort to Christianize the Thanksgiving Holiday, the Rockford Unit has established this an-

nual custom of celebrating a Solemn High Mass in one of the Aurora parishes. This is in addition to the four sectional Masses celebrated in various sections of the diocese in the Spring. The association sponsors these Masses to give the students an opportunity to actively participate in worship and, in accordance with Pius X's plea, that the people be given back the "parts that belong to them". The whole body of the Mystical Christ, in perfect unity, sings and offers sacrifice to God, the Giver of Gifts.

Plate IX.

"Workshop in Rockford, Illinois Features Ideals of Motu Proprio,"
Catholic Music Educators Bulletin 5 no. 4 (February 1953) 8.

Seminaries.

*"Then there are the seminaries, about which Pius X was pretty specific, and which have obviously not produced the goods."*⁴⁹¹

One of the more substantive if gradual improvements in music education due to the *motu proprio* occurred in the Catholic seminaries. By the end of the nineteenth century, Gregorian chant among seminarians and clergy had not only "lost caste," but had become an inside joke among them, something to be mocked.⁴⁹² In that era in which *TLS* arose, should one "dare to repeat any of that glowing eulogy [about chant], it would be for the purpose of calling attention to the incredulous smile, perhaps the undisguised sneer we should provoke."⁴⁹³ Fifty years later Francis Schmitt wryly noted the fallout:

The old tripe is sung, not because the people like it, but apparently because the clergy like it. A thousand books will not change that. The kind of music education Pius the Xth suggested in 1903 might . . . and do you mind my reminding you, this one last time, that the clergy are boys?⁴⁹⁴

Schmitt's mention of Pius X references the significant material in the *motu proprio* that deals with seminary training, comprising more than half of the "Chief Means" section.⁴⁹⁵ Pius indeed drove the point home in the ensuing letter of December 8, 1903 to Cardinal Respighi:

⁴⁹¹ Schmitt, "Boy-Choir and Its Repertoire," 106. Italicized.

⁴⁹² Stockley, "The Pope and the Reform in Church Music," 280.

⁴⁹³ H. T. Henry, "Music in the Seminaries," *AER* 6 (1892) 357.

⁴⁹⁴ Schmitt, "Boy Choir and Its Repertoire," 107.

⁴⁹⁵ *TLS*, section VIII, par. 25 - 26.

It is our will, therefore, that in all seminaries and colleges in this fostering city there be introduced once more the most ancient Roman Chant which used to resound in our churches. . . . We desire that Our young clerics, educated under our own eyes, may carry it with them and diffuse it again in their own dioceses when they return thither as priests . . .⁴⁹⁶

Following Pius X's lead, future popes showed that the seminary matter had, if anything, increased in urgency as the twentieth century progressed. Pius XI in *Divini cultus* called for "frequent and almost daily reading and practice in Gregorian chant and sacred music," in the hopes that this "broader and fuller training of the clergy in liturgical music" would make it second-nature, and make chant "a solace rather than a burden to the minds of the pupils after the study of more difficult subjects."⁴⁹⁷ Moreover, he broadened the concern, urging that future priests should *from childhood* be given musical training in elementary, higher schools, and colleges:

. . . because at that age they learn more easily those things which pertain to melody, modulations and intervals, and they can the more easily eradicate, or at least correct, faults of voice, if they have them; from which later on, when more advanced in years, they cannot be fully cured.⁴⁹⁸

Attention to the issue continued under Pius XII. On August 15, 1949 the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities published an Instruction⁴⁹⁹ which established a number of norms, requiring among them:

⁴⁹⁶ Quoted in Cyr de Brant, "Pius X: The Turning of the Tide," CAT 37 (1951) 52.

⁴⁹⁷ Acta PII PP. XI, Apostolic Constitution *Divini cultus sanctitatem*, 505.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 504.

⁴⁹⁹ Published in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, December 1949. See Rev. Benedict Ehmann, "Action at the Source," CAT 36 (1950) 146.

- church music be a required subject in seminary curricula, in theory and in practice, from beginning to end.
- a set amount of time for music, not “extra” but part of class
- annual examinations in music
- Professor of music of equal standing to other faculty
- Music curriculum submitted to Bishop each year for approval

Significantly, for the occasion of the Jubilee of the *motu proprio*, Pius XII had Monsignor Montini – the future Paul VI – write a letter on his behalf addressed to Cardinal Pizzardo, the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities, “explaining some fundamental points to Your Eminence.” The letter gave the expected encouragement to the “glorious tradition” and renewed efforts for the restoration of church music; but referring to *Mediator Dei*’s insistence that the people sing in Church, the Pizzardo letter pointedly adds that “*Principally to be considered . . . is the fact that the priest as teacher of Christian people should have proper artistic formation from his earliest seminary days.*”⁵⁰⁰

[I]t is first of all necessary that the priest, as one who teachers the Christian people and presides at divine worship, be equipped with a suitable artistic formation which must be developed gradually from the first to the last years of his life in the seminary.⁵⁰¹

In spite of the papal directives, musical change came very slowly to seminaries in the US. According to Paul Hume, there was wide agreement, among musicians at any rate, that a critical failure had taken place:

I have talked endlessly on this subject to battalions of choir directors, and *there is unanimous agreement on one point*: the Church music situation can never really improve without more active support and

⁵⁰⁰ “Pope Pius XII Commemorates the Motu Proprio,” CEC 81 no. 2 (Jan-Feb 1954) 73.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 91-2.

encouragement from the hierarchy. This seems to put it squarely up to the seminary.⁵⁰²

An early exception and impetus to others was St. Mary's Seminary at Baltimore, under music Professor Rev. Leo P. Manzetti, SS, one of three founding members of the Society of St. Gregory in America. In an era (c. 1916) when American priests were still "proud to have no ear" for music, and chant was considered "backward," Manzetti trained a highly polished *schola cantorum* of some ninety seminarians able to sing the Gregorian propers and various part-masses and motets.⁵⁰³ St. Mary's schola performed at various national events⁵⁰⁴ and was featured prominently in the pages of *The Catholic Choirmaster*, thus serving as something of a stimulus and feeder for other seminaries (e.g. St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, CA).⁵⁰⁵ By the 1930s seminary music had begun to come "back into its own," observed Archbishop John Glennon of St. Louis, far from his day when music (along with canon law) were seen as unimportant subjects. Seminary choirs were thus available and often featured at important events to provide Gregorian propers.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰² Hume, 14. The Second Vatican Council felt it necessary officially to add its voice the perennial exhortation: "Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiate houses of studies of Religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and schools." (SC 116). Forty years later Pope John Paul II simply notes, "This instruction has yet to be fully implemented." ("Chirograph of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II for the Centenary of the motu proprio 'Tra le Sollecitudini' On Sacred Music," <http://liturgy.nd.edu/documents/chirograph112203>).

⁵⁰³ See Letters to the Editor, CAT 1 no.1 (February 1915) 13-14.

⁵⁰⁴ "The Second Annual Meeting of The Society," *ibid.*, 11-12.

⁵⁰⁵ See "What is Being Done toward Promoting the Cause of Liturgical Music in this Country," CAT 2 no. 2 (April 1916) 15. Other early seminaries mentioned as active in the liturgical music movement were the Theological Seminary at San Antonio, TX, and St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, NY, under Rev. J.M. Petter. See Nicola A. Montani, "What is Being Done in Various Sections of the Country in Promoting the Cause of Liturgical Music," CAT 1 no. 3 (October 1915) 7.

⁵⁰⁶ See e.g. "Seminary Choir Provides Exemplary Musical Programs for Four Pontifical Ceremonies," CAT 24 (1938) 99.

However some seminaries imitated the “professional” model that the St. Mary’s schola had established, sometimes missing the point of *TLS*:

Thus the Dujarie Choir [of the Brothers of Holy Cross] and the neighboring splendid Choir of Moreau Seminary furnish every opportunity for the students of Notre Dame University as well as all of the people of the surrounding cities to know true Liturgical music *and to hear it properly rendered.*⁵⁰⁷

By 1953 the seminary picture was still mixed, more signs of progress apparent but among a still largely reluctant population. John Selner, SS, Manzetti’s successor at St. Mary’s in Baltimore, wrote a descriptive article entitled “Sacred Music in the Seminaries” in *CAT* in 1951, which included a valuable description of the current candidates for orders:

Few seminarians are musicians. *Most of them are embarrassed by music and, if deficient, they are often tempted to take the defensive attitude that music doesn’t count anyhow.*⁵⁰⁸

That this picture is accurate even by the 1950s is borne out in innumerable accounts of current parish clergy, this for example from 1951:

. . .[S]ome pastors are very unwilling to extend church expense to buy more music. In many cases, such priests do not give the singing of the Mass a status of dignity and quality on a par, at least, with that of the vestments and candles. As long as some kind of musical noises emanate from the choirloft, they are contented, even though the groove has worn thin.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷ Groom, “The Dujarie Choir of Notre Dame,” 145. Italics added: the people’s role is still thought of as “listening,” even to “true Liturgical music.”

⁵⁰⁸ Rev. John C. Selner, SS, “Sacred Music in the Seminaries,” *CAT* 37 (1951) 54. Italics added.

⁵⁰⁹ Rev. Benedict Ehmann, “Repertoire Is Important,” *CAT* 37 (1951) 2.

More interesting for the fate of *TLS* is Selner's point that seminarians are not inclined to jump on any "reform" bandwagons, least of all for something like music: "Our average seminarian is practical-minded in these matters and he refuses to be identified with some group which is striving for the unitive way in esthetics."⁵¹⁰

But signs of progress were about. Rev. Richard Schuler details "Music in the Minor Seminaries" in the pages of *Musart* in 1952, relating that *all* students are required to study chant and music theory on a regular basis, because "The *Mediator Dei* impresses on us the need of *participation by all* in the sung liturgy. Especially is this true in seminaries."⁵¹¹ (Note the change of inclusivity from Manzetti's days in Baltimore.) In 1953 the NCMEA brought together seminary music professors from around the Midwest to address the question of seminary curricula, looking to a broadly standardized national syllabus and textbook. For those already ordained, continuing education in music was made available through GIA and other summer institutes.⁵¹² This mixed but hopeful picture is summed up in Madsen's 1953 survey:

Twenty-five years ago, as priests quite generally know, very little organized music along the lines of the Church's plan was carried on in

⁵¹⁰ "Sacred Music in the Seminaries," 54. Selner takes the Benedictine motto RES, NON VERBA [sic] as a theme of his piece, but then seems to load down the matter with much rationalizing, including hammering the obedience theme: "We do not worship God as we like, but as the Church directs." (Ibid., 53). Moreover, his final objective would seem to fall into "VERBA": "What I want to bring out in general is that the final objective of music-training in the seminary should be the development of a *sympathetic understanding* of the problems of church music among the clergy." (53, italics added.) My own sense is that the *final* objective should be a genuine love of the church's music (to whatever degree one can participate). Every "sympathetic understanding" flows *from* that, and without it, one would just as well spend the money on candles.

⁵¹¹ Rev. Richard J. Schuler, "Music in the Minor Seminary," *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* 5 no. 2 (Oct 1952) 4. Italics added.

⁵¹² [Plate X, p. 325.]

the average seminaries. Today most of the seminaries contacted by our questionnaire have definite courses in Church music and over half of them in Church music legislation. Chant is taught regularly and some effort is made to have congregational singing. Evidences of the recent decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites on the position of the music instructor in seminaries are showing up in assignments here and there.⁵¹³

Conclusion

*"Non clamor sed amor sonat in aura Dei."*⁵¹⁴

The critical need for education for the fruition of *TLS* had many witnesses, and we close with two from the "middle" and "late" period under discussion:

Dom Ermin Vitry, OSB, wrote in 1928:

Our real weakness at the present moment is the want of a musical education among average Catholics. This assertion may perhaps hurt; and we would that it were not true. However, the statement that in our educational system music has not received the esteem and the value due to it, cannot be contradicted by anyone. . . . The reform of Church Music presupposes music as a part of general Catholic education, beginning in the grade school and ending in the university. To uphold the honor of our cause, it is high time for us to open our eyes . . .⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ "Fifty Years After," 565.

⁵¹⁴ "What God hears is not noise but love." (My translation.)

⁵¹⁵ Vitry, "Reflections on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the *Motu Proprio* on Church Music," 244-5.

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Mary Clement stated in 1953:

Admittedly we have made some progress in congregational singing; nevertheless, before great strides forward can be expected, the average Catholic will have to have a better musical education. It is towards this goal that the parochial schools of the United States are working.⁵¹⁶

Fr. Madsen among others however understood that the particular onus of *Tra le sollecitudini* was not to be met simply with improved musical skills. Music educators tended to be interested in applied methods and demonstrations: “They want to watch performances – to see how others get certain methods to produce startling results, i.e., performance results.”⁵¹⁷ But for Catholics, reminded Madsen, the question always had to be first oriented *spiritually*:

We do not want to give the impression that demonstrations are unimportant, but we contend that the much more important problem of applying our art to the salvation of our souls and the souls of those we teach is also important. . . . Finally, are we really doing our part to *restore all things in Christ* if we are not clear on the philosophy that lies behind our work?⁵¹⁸

With the growth of the Liturgical Movement, however, the ground underneath that “philosophy that lies behind our work” was quietly but fatefully shifting. As mid-century approached, the theology of the liturgical *actuosa participatio* of the faithful gained ever more prominent ascendancy; conversely, the *means* by which that participation took place faded into less significance: *form* was held less important compared to *function*. So at the

⁵¹⁶ “Sacred Music and the Liturgy,” 54, 60.

⁵¹⁷ “To Pray in Beauty,” *Catholic Music Educators Bulletin* 5 no. 4 (Feb 1953) 22.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid. Italics original.

very time the participative ideal of the *motu proprio* came into its own, the aesthetic vision which was to foster that goal lost its footing.