

St. Augustine Church
Music Ministry Formation
November, 2008



I. INTRODUCTION

Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when it is celebrated in song, with the music ministers effectively fulfilling their ministry as evidenced by the participation of the people of the assembly.

Indeed, through this form, prayer is expressed in a more attractive way: the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown; the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices; minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites; and the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem.

One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than an entire assembled community expressing its faith and devotion in song. Therefore, the active participation of the Body of Christ, the people, which is demonstrated in singing, is to be carefully promoted as follows:

- (a) It includes acclamations, responses to the greetings of the priest and ministers, and to the prayers of litany form, and also antiphons and psalms, refrains, or repeated responses, hymns and canticles.
- (b) Through suitable instruction and practices, the people should be gradually led to a fuller—indeed, to a complete—participation in those parts of the singing which pertain to them.
- (c) Some of the people's song, however, especially if the faithful have not yet been sufficiently instructed, or if musical settings for several voices are used, can be handed over to the choir alone, provided that the people are not excluded from those parts that include the entire assembly. But the usage of entrusting to the choir alone the entire singing of the whole Proper and of the whole Ordinary, to the complete exclusion of the people's participation in the singing, is to be deprecated.¹

II. The Primacy of Singing²

Pope Benedict XVI wrote on the Primacy of Singing in the Church. Quoting "The Spirit of the Liturgy" often, he pointed out that there are more than 309 references to singing in the Old Testament and 36 in the New. Pope

¹ INSTRUCTION ON MUSIC IN THE LITURGY, Sacred Assembly of Rites, 5 March, 1967

² *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, (SF, CA: Ignatius, 2000)

Benedict puts it succinctly, *"When man comes into contact with God, mere speech is not enough"*. Frankly speaking, *"Man's own being is insufficient for what he has to express, and so he invites the whole of creation to become a song with him"* as expressed in this excerpt from the Psalms.

"Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds" (Ps 57:8f.).

As expressed by the Pope, singing of the Church comes out of love for Christ Jesus. It is the utter depth of love that produces the singing. *"Cantare Amantis Est"*, says St. Augustine, singing is a lover's thing. *"In so saying, we come again to the Trinitarian interpretation of Church music. The Holy Spirit is love, and it is He who produces the singing. He is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit who draws us into love for Christ and so leads to the Father"*.

As members of the St. Augustine Choir we are asked to stand up and lead the assembly in this expression of love. We express this love in various ways but, primarily, through song. The remainder of this brief document outlines many of the activities that we must conform to in order to facilitate the Parish Family's participation in the overall Liturgy.

III. BE PREPARED

A Joyful Noise, while inspired, does not happen by accident. It is the result of practice both before the Mass and on Wednesdays.

As members of the Choir, you are encouraged to attend as many practices as your schedule permits, and members of the Choir, need to arrive early to Mass.

III.A. Choir Practice

Practices are every Wednesday evenings from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM from September through May. Any adjustments to the schedule will be addressed to the choir during practice.

III.B. Arriving Early to Mass

Cantors and all members of the Choir are asked to arrive 30 minutes prior to Mass. While this time is leveraged to warm up and practice any of the more difficult pieces of music for that Mass, it also affords you the opportunity to take a moment and pray and acknowledge the presence of Christ.

Note: The Cantor, Choir Director, or Musician may also take this time to consult with the Presider of the Mass for any special instructions.

IV. During Mass

IV. A. Processional Hymn

The Cantor or Choir will lead the assembly in the processional hymn. This is the song of Gathering, and is meant to do just that, invite and gather the community.

Note: There may be opportunities throughout the Liturgical Year to offer Preludes to the Mass. These are soft, beautiful pieces of music chosen to facilitate the gathering and focus of the Assembly on the Mass to be celebrated.³

IV. B. Psalm

The Psalm follows directly after the First Proclamation⁴. It is the responsibility of the Cantor to lead sung prayers, i.e., the Psalms. The Choir may assist in this responsibility. The Psalm is always to be sung. Where possible, the Psalm must be liturgically correct and flow from the first reading.

To sing the Psalm, the Choir will stand and remain in the Choir Section. However, the Cantor or small groups of singers (less than four singers, a.k.a. Cantors), must deliver the Psalm from the Ambo.

Note: It is a Church norm that everyone entering the sanctuary reverences the Altar of our Lord with a profound bow from the waist and bend of the neck. Therefore, no additional reverencing of the Altar is necessary during the celebration.

Note: While only a single reverence of the Altar is necessary, there are four other times which some form of reverence is required by the Cantor or Choir. These are two profound bows during the consecration (body and blood) and two head bows while receiving Eucharist (body and blood).

Following the Psalm, the Choir is seated. The Cantor(s) leaves the Ambo by the same direction as approached (the side closest to the Choir Section).

Note: It is important to remember that the Psalmist is a Lector of sorts. As such, arriving and descending from the Altar area should be as fluid as possible, and not distract the assembly from the Liturgy of the Word being proclaimed. Therefore, no one should walk between the Altar and Ambo when approaching or leaving the Ambo.

³ Preludes may not be predetermined months in advance, but will have been identified with sufficient time for the Choir and Cantors to properly prepare.

⁴ The First Proclamation is usually from the Old Testament. However, during Easter, these readings are from the Acts of the Apostles.

IV. C. Gospel

Prior to the proclamation of the Gospel by the Presider or Deacon, the Choir or Cantor calls the assembly to their feet by the Acclamation.

Note: The Gospel Acclamation is seasonal and will change. This is another good reason to attend practice.

Following the proclamation, the Choir or Cantor leads the assembly in another refrain of the Acclamation.

IV. D. Offertory or Preparation of the Table

After the Homily, the Prayer of the Faithful is offered. The Offertory and presentation of the gifts ensues. The Choir or Cantor will lead the assembly in song. (This is one of two places during the Mass where just simple instrumental music is appropriate depending upon the season.)

Note: There is flexibility in the choice of song for this part of the Mass. This can be a fully participative song involving the entire assembly or a prelude for the Eucharistic portion of the Mass. This is another good reason to attend practice.

IV. E. The Eucharist

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Mass. The role of the Choir and Cantor is to facilitate participation, responses and prayer. The Choir or Cantor role flows from facilitating of the acclamations through the Lamb of God to leading the Communion hymn.

Eucharistic Acclamations:

These are responses to the prayers and the consecration (Eucharistic Prayer). They must be sung with feeling and acknowledgement.

Note: These change over the Liturgical year. Yet another good reason to attend practice.

While the Choir or Cantor must face the assembly to sing, it is vital that the Cantor and every member of the Choir turn and face the Presider during this portion of the Mass.

The Acclamation:

The Holy, Holy really marks the beginning of the consecration. Therefore, once completed, the assembly kneels.

Note: The Choir, Cantor, and Altar Servers remain standing and facing the Altar.

Memorial Acclamation:

This is a simple expression of our faith. Turn, face the assembly and proclaim it confidently.

During the consecration, the Presider and Deacon venerate the transubstantiated Body and then Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ to

acknowledge the real presence of our Lord. Each time they venerate (Deacon bows from the waist and the Presider genuflects), the Choir and Cantor must bow from the waist with a slight bend of the neck in witness to the great paschal mystery.

Great Amen:

This concludes the consecration of the gifts. Again, turn to face the assembly, and proclaim it confidently.

Note: The Our Father follows the Great Amen. The last row of the Choir section (the last line) may step onto the Altar and join hands with the closest Altar Server.

Note: While the Our Father is often recited, the Presider may choose to chant or sing the Our Father. The Choir Director or Cantor should confer with the Presider prior to Mass so there are no surprises.

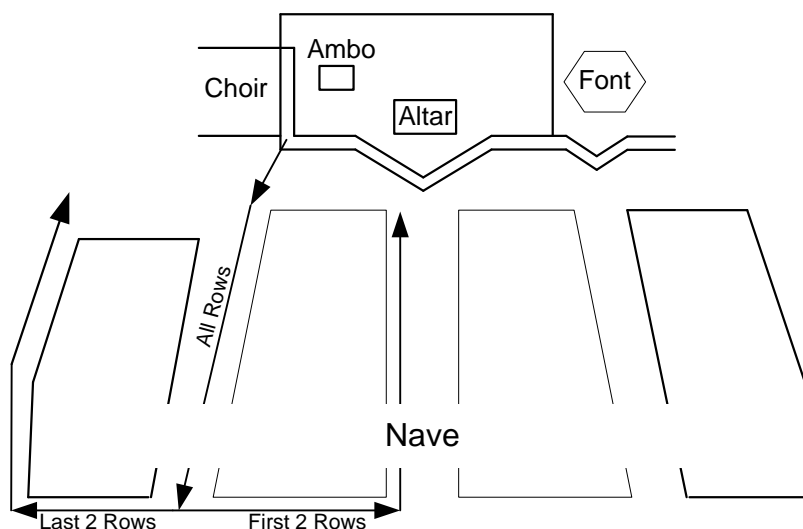
Sign of Peace:

This follows the Our Father and marks a busy time (a lot of movement) for the assembly. The Choir will take this time to file out to prepare to receive Holy Communion.

Note: The Cantor and Choir Director (or designate) will remain behind to facilitate the Lamb of God.

The path for the Choir to prepare for Communion is depicted in the illustration below.

- The first two rows exit in order down the aisle directly in front of the Choir section and proceed to the back of the Church, and return up the middle of the Nave closest to the Choir section.
- The last two rows exit in order to the right from the Choir section behind the piano and organ, and go down the side aisle next to the Chapel, and return via the same route.



Note: To facilitate getting back into the Choir Pews, members are asked to remain in the same order as previously seated.

Note: If there are only two rows of Choir members present, they have the option of both receiving from the main aisle or back half to the Chapel aisle and front half to the main aisle.

Lamb of God:

The Cantor and Choir member(s) lead the assembly in the Litany, Lamb of God. The Choir participates as always.

Following the Lamb of God, the Cantor, along with the musician (s) will join the line of Eucharistic Ministers to receive Communion.

Communion:

During this time, the Choir and Cantor remain to facilitate the prayer. Given the size of our assembly, an additional song is necessary.

Note: According to our new posture of worship, when receiving Communion, it is the norm that you approach the Eucharistic Minister with a bow of the head and your hands up and out, and with a confident Amen, receive the Body of Christ. Once you have consumed the Body of Christ proceed in the same manner to the Blood of Christ and repeat.

If not receiving communion under one or both Species, the norm is that you still reverence the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine (body and blood) with a bow of the head. If you are not able to receive communion under either species, you are to approach the Eucharistic Minister with arms crossed at the shoulders and continue to bow and receive a blessing.

Note: For the Cantor and Musicians, the intent was to have you receive from Station 1 (Chapel Aisle). However, the logistics are sufficiently complicated when there are dismissals and a large volume of parishioners at Station 4 (Commons Aisle) that you are request to step into Station 2 (priest aisle) to receive Eucharist.

IV. F. Hymn of Sending

The Hymn of Sending occurs after the Parish Announcements and concluding prayer by the Presider and Deacon. This hymn is often topical to either the season or a particular message supporting activism.

V. ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ It is important to remember that while the Choir and Cantor must be visible and able to lead the Assembly, it is as important for the Cantor and Choir to not take on the persona of elitism or separateness. The Choir and Cantor are members of the Assembly first.
- ✓ The Choir Director or Cantor should consult the Deacon or Presider regarding special instruction for Lent, Advent, Easter, Christmas, Holy

Day Liturgical Celebrations, Baptisms, First Communions and Confirmation.

- ✓ It is definitely recommended that each Cantor and Choir Member practice regularly. You may find it helpful to record practices to assist in your proclamation of the Word through song.
- ✓ It is recommended that each member of the Choir and Cantors read the readings for the up coming Liturgy in advance. This will help to further comprehend the song selections.
- ✓ A note about bowing. As a cantor or choir member, there are five prescribed times for bowing:
 1. A profound bow to the Altar upon entering church.
 2. A profound bow during the veneration of the body during the Eucharist.
 3. A profound bow during the veneration of the blood during the Eucharist.
 4. A head bow to the Body during communion of the Body of Christ.
 5. A head bow to the Blood during communion of the Blood of Christ.Note that there are no other times where a bow is prescribed or appropriate with one exception. If the Cantor or Choir is venerated with incense, the proper response is a profound bow. However, if you are in the process of a song, signing oneself with the Sign of the Cross is appropriate.
- ✓ Other recommended reading to further enforce your understanding of the role and importance of music during the liturgy. These include *The Liturgy Documents Volume One, A Parish Resource Fourth Edition;* Liturgy Training Documents 2004.
Ministry & Liturgy, A comprehensive resource for integrated ministry.
- ✓ Always remember that the music of the Mass must have "grandeur yet simplicity; solemnity and majesty," and must have "dignity," and "gravity," should be "exalted" and "sublime," should bring "splendor and devotion" to the liturgy, and must be engaging and conducive to prayer and liturgical participation, rather than distracting the listener from prayer. It must be music that befits the profound nature of the Mass, which is the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As Pope Paul VI put it, "The primary purpose of sacred music is to evoke God's majesty and to honor it. But at the same time music is meant to be a solemn affirmation of the most genuine nobility of the human person, that of prayer."

To this end, it is recommended that the Cantor and Choir members take the time to pray before Mass, perhaps to Saint Cecilia the patron Saint of Music.

“Prayer to Saint Cecilia for Preparation”

Dear Saint Cecilia, one thing we know for certain about you is that you became a heroic martyr in fidelity to your divine Bridegroom. We do not know that you were a musician but we are told that you heard Angels sing. Inspire musicians to gladden the hearts of people by filling the air with God's gift of music and reminding them of the divine Musician who created all beauty.

Amen.



Note: If you have any questions, comments, or need assistance, please feel free to call Christopher Corrigan at 381-1058 or simply drop a message in the Worship mailbox in the Sacristy.