

Music at Mass not just an Extra, Says Bishop Casey



Liturgy and Life

Maurice Lavanoux whose professional services as a draftsman have been utilized in the offices of Catholic architects in New York, Boston, and Santa Barbara, California, has been secretary of the Liturgical Arts Society of New York since its beginning in 1928. The society was designed by its lay founders—the majority of them professionally interested in the arts—as an organization with “a basically spiritual foundation and a strong practical purpose which will appeal to the ever-increasing number of those who regard the liturgical revival as the groundwork preceding the realization of the social programme of the church throughout the world.” Mr. Lavanoux has served as editor of the society's Liturgical Arts Quarterly, a magazine for the promotion of a proper concept of art as applied to Christian worship.

A Constant Need To Scrutinize Law

Catholics and Protestants, still deeply divided doctrinally, are finding increased areas of agreement in the application of faith to the world's complex problems.

Basically, both Catholics and Protestants agree that religion can't stay in the church. It does its business in the world. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, who retired this week as head of the World Council of Churches, said, “It is striking how in many countries the word of churches has become an important factor in the formation of public opinion and in making national decisions.”

He admitted, however, that “we have not yet worked out sufficiently clear theology and methodology concerning our witness in these fields.”

“We need more thought on . . . the presence of the church in the world. We need more definite criteria as to the choice of issues on which we should speak,” he said.

This problem was well illustrated here in New York State as the Legislature in Albany debated reform of the state's 179-year old divorce law and a proposal to operate a state lottery to benefit education.

Protestant spokesmen opposed the lottery, some said it would be “immoral.”

Catholics, traditionally opposed to divorce, have been accused of stalling reform legislation—a charge denied this week by the spokesman for the Catholic bishops of the state as reported on page one of this issue of the Courier.

And it is interesting to note that those who opposed the lottery idea were generally in favor of the easing of the divorce law and those opposed to changing the divorce law readily accepted the proposed lottery.

Cynics may comment that all this sounds like a revival of the Salem witch-hunt days or the more recent Prohibition era—both of which proved you can't legislate virtue or outlaw sin.

Actually both the Catholic and Protestant spokesmen at the legislative hearings on the lottery and divorce topics showed a vastly more sophisticated and much more mature attitude than their witch-hunt or prohibition ancestors.

The laws of religion—like the laws of the city, state and nation—are not just arbitrary edicts of fanatics, they are more often the essence of the accumulated wisdom and experience of centuries. These laws and moral and ethical norms of the various churches embody not just alleged religious revelation but what today are recognized as profound psychological and sociological imperatives.

It is, of course, true that church laws need to be frequently scrutinized—as the Vatican Council so emphatically indicated. Even revelations are ultimately formulated in human terms, forever inadequate for so lofty a task, and there is, therefore, constant need to formulate the doctrines and laws of churches in new terms.

And such is also true of civil laws.

The human condition is itself almost as deep a mystery as any dogma of faith. Laws enacted today cannot be expected to be of value a century from now—and laws enacted nearly two centuries ago cannot be expected to be adequate to the needs of our present time.

When Catholics and Protestants confront each other on these day to day issues, they should realize that each heritage is something more than that of a sect with a bag of idiotic regulations and restrictions, that it is instead the present amalgam of many human hearts and history.

Their contribution to the discussion of proposed legislation—even if different and sometimes perhaps contrary—can contribute to the shaping of wiser laws for our State. The voice of the churches is, therefore, not an intrusion but a gift that should be welcomed and appreciated not only in Albany but throughout the State.

—Father Henry Atwell

When I was invited by Father Sheehan to give this on “Liturgy and Music in the Life of the Parish,” I hesitated a bit before accepting. Although I like to listen to good music, I am no musician and don't know the difference between an A sharp and a G clef. On the vocal side, I am not very competent either. This I know from disparaging remarks my assistants have made about my church singing. They were charitable but objective.

Despite this handicap, I welcome the opportunity to pay tribute to those who are promoting the Music Workshops in various parts of the diocese and to pay tribute to all of you, teachers, organists, choirmasters and congregation leaders who are doing so much to implement the decrees of “The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy” in our parishes and schools. Bishop Kearney appreciates all you have already done in the field of church music, and he and the members of the Diocesan Music Commission stand solidly behind your efforts.

The presence of such a large group of church musicians at this gathering is indicative of the spirit of the great majority of the people of this diocese as we enter into the period of liturgical innovation in the Church. It is about this concept of innovation I would speak to you today, addressing you not primarily as a bishop but rather as pastor of a parish which, like your own, is confronted by the same problems while striving for the same goals.

From the day Pope John coined the word “aggiornamento” to describe the work of the great council, all kinds of new words and phrases have been added to our Catholic vocabulary. By now, we have grown accustomed to them and they come readily to our lips—dialogue, congregational participation, the People of God, entrance hymn, the Liturgy of the Word. You are not even surprised to read in the program for this Workshop that the priest who used to be called the celebrant of the Mass is now referred to as “the president of the assembly.”

You and I have seen many changes in liturgical worship in the last five years affecting God's people. All of these changes have not been universally accepted. This is not surprising. In man's history, sudden change has never been accepted with widespread welcome, especially changes involving alterations in the behavior patterns of the people. Brownie spoke for the common man, saying,

“I detest all change
And most, a change in aught
I loved long since.”

The silence of hundreds of years of congregational worship has been broken by a plea for active participation in prayer and song. The years of educating the worshipper to follow his missal have been replaced by asking the same parishioner to listen to the word of God in the Scripture and to stand and join in the singing. Some of the hymns sung by the devout for decades have been discarded as being poor in text or poor in musical structure, and now they are singing some hymns which have formerly been associated with the Protestant worship service.

The tradition of centuries of praying in the ancient Latin tongue has largely disappeared and the people are praying in their own tongue at Mass—a tongue which they psychologically associate with ordinary daily communication, with the humor, the reprimands, the urgencies, the small talk of everyday life.

Yet the Church, knowing the difficulties, the doubts, the misunderstandings, the initial confusion which would be caused by innovation has in her sublime wisdom, through the Vatican Council, reformed her liturgy to meet the needs of modern man.

The great majority of our people, and this is equally true of the priests themselves, have benefited spiritually and psychologically by these changes. They are moved by speaking and hearing the Word of God in their own language. They are gradually coming to see that sung prayer is prayer of the most intimate kind, and that the Eucharist is the greatest prayer of all.

This is the full text of Auxiliary Bishop Lawrence B. Casey's talk at the workshop held at Mercy High School for organists and choir directors of the Rochester area Saturday, Feb. 12. The workshop was the third of three such programs arranged by the Diocesan Music Commission to aid church musicians in material now available for the new English texts of church ceremonies.

In the old days, many saw the Eucharistic Sacrifice as a haven of escape, a sort of interlude divorced from the cares and activities of human life. Now, through the new liturgy, we understand more clearly the precise purpose of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. As Pope Paul said, it is to unite men into a family of God, Christ's brothers who love each other. At Midnight Mass on Christmas I had the feeling, as I looked out at the people, “Here we all are, one family, gathered around the banquet table of the Lord. Because we are all members of one family we should try to love each other.”

You who are here today are understandably enthusiastic about the new liturgy. It has deepened your spiritual life, given a new meaning to your worship of God. Part of your apostolate is to communicate this enthusiasm to others, spreading the word in your own way and by not being discouraged by temporary setbacks. You represent the mind of the Church and you cannot go wrong if you follow that.

Music is no longer a kind of extra at the Mass, something which decorates the liturgy, as it were. Music is part of the transfiguring activity of the Mass. It is, as the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy expresses it, “a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy” VI, 112. Singing is liturgical action. It is a normal way of expressing happiness and it should be a normal way of expressing our prayers to God when we assemble on a Sunday morning in all our churches.

Actually, there should be no dispute in the Church about the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Once it was promulgated by Pope Paul, the time for dispute was over. Both factions in the Church, therefore, should go along wholeheartedly with its directives. The progressives in the liturgical field have to realize that certain changes they had hoped for will not be achieved and learn to accept the situation. The conservatives, having spent their lives telling people to recognize the will of God in authority, must now accept the Council decrees and join the rest. This period of transition in the Church's history will certainly be a great challenge to all.

At this point, let's discuss some of the problems facing you church musicians. First, the music itself. I think some of the contemporary (vernacular) music is not good. It does not raise the spirits nor does it inspire devotion. Moreover, it offends the ears of the non-musician. Any change in the standards of musical appreciation is not effected by the re-

lentless repetition of a poor number by some determined organist who feels that his parishioners must be “educated” to the better things.

These musicians are viewing the whole Church from the limited framework of personal preference. Pope Paul, in his Apostolic Exhortation closing the Council, warned that “it will be necessary to restrain the impatience of some who would unduly to private novelties of their own and thus do no small amount of harm to the plan for renewal.”

We can mention other problems, the rapport between the pastor and the organist or choir director, learning how to lead the people in hymns, the need for further study to meet the challenges offered by the new liturgy. From your own experience in Church music, you could probably add many more items to this list.

So much for the problems. The purpose of this workshop is to discuss solutions, and I do this with diffidence because music is not my field. Please take these suggestions for novelty ever they are worth. We all know that there is no one, easy solution to these problems.

Before long, fine new music for the vernacular will be available. The U.S. Bishop's Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate is working on this project. You will have music which will not only give the choir full and attractive expression but will also accommodate the congregation into the score, according to the new requirements.

One example of this new music is Frank Pilecki's “Mass for High Festival Occasions” which was sung at the dedication of the new Cathedral organ. This occasion proved one point: the members of the congregation are inspired to sing with greater spirit and religious feeling if they have a good choir to lead them. Father Smith and his St. Bernard's Choir and Mr. Louis Uginio who directed the singing of the congregation combined to give a performance which was “out of this world.” We heard the recording of the Mass the other evening and Mr. Frank Morris did a superb job. You may agree with this estimate after you hear the record when it is issued shortly. Forgive the slight “commercial.”

On the parish level, pastors are quickly realizing these days how much the new liturgy depends on music and how much they depend upon the music director. Without a good musician on the staff, the successful development of the liturgy is stymied in any parish. Good rapport between the pastor and the organist and the choir director,



Choir directors listened attentively to speakers at weekend workshop arranged by Diocesan Music Commission.

a genuine effort to understand each other's problems, is the only solution, even for survival. The priests realize that musicians are pre-occupied more, and rightly so, with the problems of their music, rehearsals, repertoire, choir, and so on, than with the pastoral problem of integrating the entire congregation into the musical dialogue of the liturgy.

With good will, the parish music staff can become reconciled to this wider field of musical expression if it realizes that the choir is not being downgraded but rather that the congregation is being added to the ensemble, regaining a role it should never have lost. Here, the additional burden on the musicians will be more than compensated by the results—the galvanizing of the congregation into a living, devout unity through the music.

You can help the movement for good music in your diocese by further study. Certainly, with the great resources of musical education in Rochester, this diocese should be a leader in promoting the best in Church music for our organists and choir directors. For some, a workshop such as this might be all that is necessary. For others, this gathering may provide the necessary inspiration to return to the rigorous schedule of study necessary to fulfill their obligations to the people of their ability. Virgil Fox came to Rochester after a long day's journey. He immediately went over to the Cathedral organ and practiced from 10:30 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. in preparation for his recitals. All of us might imitate his total dedication to his profession. We are working for God and it should be our best work.

In your work, have patience, above all. Have patience with the Church for the changes she has made. Despite the loss of the familiar chants, the temporary loss of the great polyphonic numbers, and the permanent disappearance of the choir's monopoly in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist, have patience. “The old order changeth, yielding place to the new; and God fulfills Himself in many ways.”

In the field of church music, there is bound to be a period of trial and error. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy does not give us a code of canon law. For the most part, it presents only the general principles of renewal and these principles must be worked out concretely. The mistakes which will occur represent the price of progress.

Your Diocesan Music Commission is no “paper” organization but a vital force in implementing the new liturgical changes. Following the directives issued by the U.S. Bishop's Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, the diocesan commission will serve as a clearing-house of ideas and projects. Its bulletins (and we hope they come out at regular intervals) will broadcast ideas, guide lines and directives, repertoire suggestions and other helpful hints. The net effect of all this should be a greater unity and solidarity among the church musicians of the diocese.

“I will go to the altar of God,” the priest says as he begins Mass. He does not make the journey alone. His people are with him, one assembly, one family. By truly uniting the priest and the congregation in one mind, one heart, one voice, the Mass makes the presence of Christ the High Priest in our midst real.

One final excerpt from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy sums up this talk. “When the Church prays or sings or acts, the faith of those taking part is nourished, and their minds are raised to God, so that they may offer Him their rational service and more abundantly receive His grace.” I, 23

All this is your particular concern. Your work is a sign of your faith, and it is for you and your fellow parishioners. You share with your priests the responsibility of helping man communicate with God. There is no higher work than this.

Even on Saturday

Bonn — (NC) — In priest-short tourist centers in Germany and in areas where Catholics are widely dispersed, it is now possible to fulfill Sunday Mass obligations on Saturdays. The decision to permit the privilege in Germany was announced by the chairman of the German Bishops Conference, Julius Cardinal Doepfner of Munich and Freising.

Nigeria's refusal to back the United States move at the Security Council, accordingly, boiled down to a judgment that no benefit could be won by it in the current atmosphere over Vietnam. This is a judgment in which, for better or worse, most UN members concurred.

Chief Adebore considered that Washington had doomed its own proposal by renewing the bombing of North Vietnam at the very same time as it asked the United Nations to mediate. Vatican spokesmen have indicated that Pope Paul's reaction was similar.

Chief Adebore had a polite but serious rebuke for the press. In reporting the United Nations to focus excessively on the confrontation of the super-powers. But the whole concept of the UN is to interpose the small nations whose concerns are those of the small man everywhere, simple survival. A climate for peace would be strengthened, he believes, if their contribution to UN debate was better known by the public of the United States and of the world.



Choir of Fairport's Assumption Church, directed by Mrs. Virginia Bogdan Pados, demonstrated range of possibilities from simple chant to complicated music for new English texts of Catholic rites.

Why Didn't Nigeria Back Us at UN?

By GARY MacEOIN

United Nations — I have just been taking part in a television program with Chief Adebore, ambassador of Nigeria to the United Nations. The program was one of a series of weekly interviews of UN personalities produced with the cooperation of the Overseas Press Club which provides panelists familiar with the area under discussion. When I am around, they often ask me to participate.

There were two news reasons for talking to Chief Adebore. His country, the most populous in Africa, has just been through a short but sharp revolutionary upheaval. Would the moderation which had characterized it since it became independent in 1930 survive, or was there a likelihood of yet another Congo-type area of anarchy?

Simultaneously, Nigeria as a member of the Security Council was abstaining on the United States motion to get the United Nations to assume the role of negotiator in the Vietnam war. Did this perhaps mean that Nigeria's new regime was starting to drift after some of the other new African states to a greater distance from the West in the Cold War?

Chief Adebore's review of the unrest in Nigeria encouraged us to hope that his country can get back to constitutional government fairly soon. It was common knowledge that politicians in power in some parts of the federation had rigged last year's elections to hold on to their jobs. They have now paid, some with their lives, for attempting to frustrate the popular will. Hopefully, this harsh lesson will not be soon forgotten.

There was an unusual element about the military intervention. The rebellion was led by young officers. They achieved their stated purpose, which was to get rid of rigged elections. But they themselves were the groups who had usurped power by in turn ousted by the higher officers who remained faithful to President Azikiwe, the liberator and universally revered head of the country. The current military government operates with his consent and presumably would at any time return control to him.

Before that happens, however, one crucial issue must be resolved. Nigeria has taken two censuses since 1960, but the results were so inaccurate and contradictory that neither was accepted officially.

Each region suspects the others of inflating its population to increase its representation in the federal parliament.

Tension is aggravated because the northern region, the most populous, is predominantly Moslem. The others fear that if it gets a majority of the seats in the federal parliament (as indicated by the disputed censuses), it would proclaim Nigeria an officially Islamic state. The north, for its part, is less developed and fears the political and technical domination of the other regions.

Northern backwardness is largely a result of the historical development of education by the Christian mission. They made little progress among the Moslems and consequently concentrated in the rest of the country. Nigerians are doing their best to redress the balance. In 1960, they started a university in Kano in the north as one of five regional universities. Previously, the only university college was in Ibadan near the capital.

Chief Adebore was very emphatic in his insistence that there has been no change in Nigeria's foreign policy. The civil service has not been purged. He and all other

ambassadors continue in their former posts.

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