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UPCOMING FOR YOUR CALENDAR

The ACU Centre for Liturgy will host its third online public lecture of 2021 in October. Contact CentreforLiturgy@acu.edu.au to be notified when further information becomes available.

Please email us for more information, or to register to hear about upcoming events.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Vatican II devoted only 10 paragraphs of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) to sacred music (SC #112-#121), and yet managed to inspire a clear trajectory for composers of liturgical music. As sacred song united to liturgical text, sacred music “forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy” (SC #112) and is more holy when it is closely connected with the liturgical action. When it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, conveys greater solemnity on the sacred rites (SC #112) and fosters the active participation of the assembly (SC #114), liturgical music achieves the aims of the liturgy itself: glorifying God and sanctifying the faithful (SC #112). SC strongly emphasises the need for the teaching and practice of music in Catholic educational institutions, and stresses that composers must “be given a genuine liturgical training” (SC #115). One cannot be a composer of liturgical music without being adept in both of its aspects: liturgical knowledge and musical skill.

In this newsletter we are privileged to share the wisdom of two world-renowned

composers of liturgical music.

Fr Christopher Willcock SJ reflects on the various genres of liturgical prayer and the composition of music which enables the assembly truly to pray through its singing, because musical form matches ritual moment. Fr J Michael Joncas explores the craft of composing authentic musical prayer for multi-lingual assemblies which are an increasing feature of our multicultural society.

It is “when in our music God is glorified” and we become holy in God’s presence, that the musical elements of our liturgies serve their intended purpose. *Cantabo in gaudium!*



Professor Clare V. Johnson

Director, ACU Centre for Liturgy
Professor of Liturgical Studies & Sacramental Theology, Faculty of Theology & Philosophy

FROM OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS

Given our experience since the liturgical reform and renewal over the past 50 years, composing liturgical music to be sung by the assembly today should focus ideally on the following:

1. Textual appropriateness if meant to accompany a ritual action, and textual integrity, i.e., sourced from either Holy Scripture or liturgical texts.
2. A melody that is within a range accessible to the ‘ordinary’ worshipper and is not too complex in terms of rhythmic structure.

3. Is composed in a style that will assist the worshipper in their prayer but also express the unity of the assembly, i.e., the ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ which is primary, particularly in celebrations of the Eucharist.



The Very Rev Peter Williams is Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia, Diocese of Parramatta



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NEWS AND RECENT EVENTS

Rev Msgr Kevin W. Irwin presented the online public lecture, “Liturgy and Sacraments in a COVID World: Renewal not Restoration”, on 17 May to an audience of nearly 200 as part of the ACU Centre for Liturgy’s new lecture series. Professor Clare Johnson chaired the event and the Centre’s Assistant Director Dr Jason McFarland offered a response. Feedback has been enthusiastic.

Also, as part of this lecture series, on 19 July Rev Dr J Michael Joncas presented a thought-provoking and practical lecture entitled “Composing for a Church at Prayer” to a similarly large and highly engaged audience.

Professor Clare Johnson, Director of the Centre, was the Lecturer-in-Charge for an innovative offering of **THLS502: Liturgical Music**. For the first time, the postgraduate unit

was also offered as a professional learning seminar. Face-to-face at ACU’s Melbourne Campus, Professor Johnson led four days of learning along with guest presenters Dr Philip Matthias (Director of Music at St Patrick’s Cathedral, Melbourne), Dr Jennifer Wakeling (musician, educator and researcher in music theology) and Dr Andrew Cichy (organist and musicologist).

LITURGY SPOTLIGHT

What’s this composer think he’s doing?

In the 1970s I was putting together a varied collection of my liturgical music for publication. I asked some of my Jesuit colleagues for suggestions about the title I should give the collection. Of these the one that I decided upon was ‘Songs of Prayer’. A few people were puzzled. “Don’t you mean ‘Songs of Praise’?” they said, thinking that I had made a slip. Songs of Prayer, I believe, well describes what I do as a composer for the Church at prayer. Yes, much of what we sing during our liturgies is about the praise of God, but equally as much could be described in other terms that complement ‘praise’.

When it sings, what is it that the assembly is doing when it asks forgiveness, when it intercedes, when it blesses, when it calls to remembrance, when it gives thanks, and so on? All these sung actions could be fairly described as ‘prayer’. As a composer, therefore, what I seek to do when I write for the liturgy is to be keenly aware of what type or genre of prayer I am working with as I set a particular liturgical text to music. Is it an act of penitence, an intercession, a blessing, a form of anamnesis, an act of thanksgiving? Or some other liturgical genre?

At the time of the Second Vatican Council and its Constitution on the Liturgy a number of liturgical genres were mentioned: acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs (SC #30). More recently other forms have been identified, among them litanies and the various ostinato forms popularised by the experience of supplying music for the large multi-lingual groups at Taizé. There has been a growing awareness among both composers and the assemblies for whom they write to try and match ritual behaviour with musical forms and patterns that respect the ritual characteristics proper to the various liturgical units. At the same time there has been a movement away from the panacea of singing a hymn



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whenever singing was needed towards finding a form where the rite, the text, and the music are all congruent and not jostling in some awkward assortment.

Getting this recipe of rite, text, and music correctly integrated is not only the job of the composer, it is also the responsibility of those whose role it is to bring the liturgy alive for a given community. What is true of any recipe in a kitchen – that the result will only be as good as the cook using it – is also true of the liturgical forms, spoken, sung or embodied; they will only be effective to the extent that the liturgical ‘agents’ communicating these forms know what they are on about.

Clearly, the matters caught in this ‘spotlight’ need to be examined in greater depth and illuminated in broader detail than is possible here. But to return to the composer’s task. One aspect of it that often goes unremarked is that the composer of liturgical music is charged with the responsibility of finding a voice that the worshipping assembly can recognise as its own. Finding a common voice for singing in worship is particularly challenging. A given community may have a well-defined set of understandings of the Church, a common language, broadly equivalent educational backgrounds, a balanced

mixture of gender and generational representation, and so on. Most communities today, however, could not be said to share such a base of commonality. Nevertheless, both sorts of communities, the well-defined and the more variegated in composition, are called to worship at the one table. Composing for such a church at prayer is by no means an evident matter. It can only be attempted if there is sensitivity both to those gathered for worship and to the liturgical functions the whole assembly is called to fulfil. To that extent, therefore, can our sung worship be said to be both praise and prayer.



Christopher Willcock, Jesuit priest and composer, has taught sacramental theology and liturgical studies, and has written a large body of music for the liturgy and

the concert hall. He studied pianoforte at the Sydney Conservatorium, composition at the University of Sydney, and did his doctoral work in liturgical studies and sacramental theology at the Institute Catholique de Paris.

Composing for multi-lingual liturgy

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their 2007 document *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* offered guidance to composers and music ministers on providing music for multi-cultural liturgical celebrations:

60. Liturgical music today must reflect the multicultural diversity and intercultural relationships of the members of the gathered liturgical assembly.... Liturgical leaders and musicians should encourage not only the use of traditional music of other languages and peoples, but also the incorporation of newly composed liturgical music appropriate to various cultural expressions in harmony with the theological meaning of these rites. Care should be taken, however, to choose appropriate hymns in other languages so as to avoid an expression that could be misconstrued as tokenism.

Furthering this guidance, here are a few models for composing for multi-lingual and multi-cultural liturgies that have arisen in the past few decades:

Model 1: *Employing ancient languages.* For centuries the Roman Rite was celebrated in Latin with occasional Greek (e.g., Kyrie eleison) and Hebrew (e.g., Alleluia) phrases incorporated (and still may be). Composers might set short texts in these ancient languages intended for multi-lingual communities. In effect, by using short texts that are not in any contemporary language, all worshipers are invited to step outside of their linguistic comfort zone for the sake of their common worship. Some of the ostinatos and refrains created for ecumenical community worship at Taizé, primarily by Jacques Berthier, exemplify this model. A further development of this

model would have the congregational refrain (e.g., Miserere nobis) sung by the assembly responding to verses sung by cantors in various contemporary languages.

Model 2: Learning to sing in others' native languages. The South African chant *Siyahamba* invites congregations to sing a Zulu text in harmony while engaging the body in rhythmic motions. While it is possible to sing this chant in English (as 'We are marching in the light of God'), it is a powerful prayer experience to sing it in the original language.

Model 3: Translating song texts. In this model a well-established melody with a text in one language hosts a new text applied to the same melody. 'Adeste fideles' becomes 'O Come All Ye Faithful' or 'Pescador de Hombres' appears as 'Lord, when you came to the seashore'. Singing another cultural group's language (as in Model 2) may be uncomfortable at first but can grow into a genuine expression of ecclesial hospitality.

Model 4: Alternating languages within a single text. Many of Bob Hurd's compositions beautifully illustrate this model, e.g., 'Pan de vida, cuerpo del Señor/cup of blessing, blood of Christ the Lord. /At this table the last shall be first,/ poder es server, porque Dios es amor.'

Model 5: Singing/reciting multiple languages at the same time. Certain foundational texts well-known to all the members of a multi-lingual worship assembly, such as the Lord's Prayer, might be recited by all linguistic groups in their native languages simultaneously.

As our worshiping assemblies grow increasingly multi-lingual and multi-cultural, may we learn to pray using these models to deepen our full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy.



Fr (Jan) Michael Joncas is a priest of the Archdiocese of St Paul-Minneapolis and holds degrees in liturgical studies from the University of

Notre Dame (USA) and the Pontifical Liturgical Institute in Rome. He is the author of six books and more than 250 articles and has composed and arranged more than 300 pieces of liturgical music. He is currently Artist in Residence and Research Fellow in Catholic Studies at the University of St Thomas, St Paul, Minnesota.

STUDY LITURGY AT ACU

ACU's Faculty of Theology and Philosophy offers a range of academic programs in liturgy and sacramental theology, including the 4-unit Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies (Liturgy), the 8-unit Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies (Liturgy) as well as the prestigious Master of Theological Studies (Liturgical Studies). Research degrees at masters and doctoral levels are also available. For further information on these programs contact: ftp.pg@acu.edu.au

Resources for celebration

Recently published by St Paul's (stpauls.com.au), *Excerpts from the Roman Missal (Book of the Chair)* has been approved for use in the dioceses of Australia. Of a more manageable size than the full edition of *The Roman Missal*, this ritual book contains all the prayers prayed from the presider's chair.

The National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council (NLAAC), an advisory body to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, has created the website Australian Catholic Liturgical Art (art.catholic.org.au) to showcase the best of Australian liturgical art.



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Engage our expertise

Improve liturgical celebration in your parish

The ACU Centre for Liturgy provides specialised training and formation workshops for parish ministers and liturgical musicians on a variety of topics. We can conduct a parish liturgy audit or a parish liturgical music audit to help you to identify specific ways to enhance your liturgical celebrations.

Help your teachers and religious education leaders to deepen their understanding of the liturgy

We tailor workshops and professional development sessions to the specific needs of schools and Catholic education offices.

Develop your skills as a presider at liturgy

Clergy can engage in our specialised professional development sessions on a range of topics from presidential singing to the art of presiding at worship, and the craft of preaching.

Bring our experts to you

Our academics and specialists are available to deliver keynote addresses, public lectures, and conference workshops tailored to meet the needs of your organisation or event.

Study liturgy and sacramental theology

You can study academic courses or undertake higher degree research in liturgical studies and sacramental theology through ACU's Faculty of Theology and Philosophy. Contact us for further information.

Support our work in rural and low-income parishes

You can support the crucial work of the ACU Centre for Liturgy by making a donation through the **Give Now** portal on our website. ACU is a not-for-profit institution, and all gifts of \$2 or more to the ACU Centre for Liturgy are tax deductible. 100 per cent of your gift will be utilised to provide essential formative education in liturgy and sacraments in areas of need. Endowments, pledges, bequests and gifts in kind are welcome.

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The Liturgy Nexus and Liturgy Nexus for Schools

Are you a postgraduate qualified liturgist or do you work in a liturgy-related profession (e.g., liturgical architecture, art or music)? Consider joining the Liturgy Nexus, an online subscription-based closed network for conversation on liturgical issues, resource sharing and problem solving. Memberships and associate memberships are available depending on your qualification level.

Does your work in Catholic schools involve preparing liturgies? The Liturgy Nexus for Schools is where you can ask questions and develop your expertise in preparing engaging and prayerful liturgical celebrations for school communities.

To join the Liturgy Nexus or Liturgy Nexus for Schools, apply on the ACU Centre for Liturgy website. Membership is granted to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria. The membership fee is \$30 per year (not pro-rated), renewable on or before 1 March each year.

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