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Public lectures

7 August

Dr Phyllis Zagano, Hofstra University: What would a Catholic female Diaconate look like in the 21st Century?

6 November

Professor Teresa Berger, Yale University: Forecasting Catholic liturgy 40 years into the future.

Check our website for further details.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

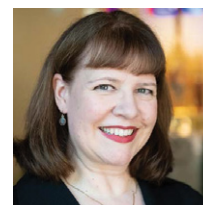
There is something very special about getting together in person to celebrate occasions big or small. As we continue our return to 'normal' life following the pandemic, it is important to encourage our assemblies to find their voice when we gather for liturgy.

Vatican II called for the assembly's voice to sound forth in corporate prayer and song. When we come to celebrate liturgy 'with proper dispositions' and our 'minds attuned to our voices', cooperating with divine grace, fully aware of what we're doing and actively engaged in the rites, we will be enriched by their effects (SC11). Active engagement entails both internal and external participation, and one of the key modes of external liturgical participation is vocal as we "take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs" (SC30). It is easy to lose liturgical 'match fitness' when we don't celebrate liturgy together on a regular basis, and it is important for those preparing, ministering within, and presiding at liturgy to do all they can to aid the assembly to express its liturgical voice with confidence.

In this newsletter, Professor Judith Kubicki CSSF offers a wonderful reflection on why the worshipping assembly is called together as a mode of Christ's presence to celebrate liturgy, and how singing together binds us through body, mind and spirit, as our voices join a chorus of praise. In his useful article, Dr Paul Taylor explores multiple practical ways in which liturgical presiders and music leaders can help the assembly to find its musical voice. I invite you to explore how these articles can help to call forth your assembly's vocal praise.



Images by Giovanni Portelli Photography



Professor Clare V. Johnson

Director, ACU Centre for Liturgy
Professor of Liturgical Studies and Sacramental

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Endorsed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

FROM OUR BOARD OF ADVISORS

The assembly's voice

At the height of the COVID pandemic, we were not able to gather for Mass. Then we began to meet again and I felt a fresh appreciation for the gift of coming together in person for prayer, standing with other people, hearing their voices around me as we sang an opening hymn,

sharing a gesture as we made the sign of the cross together.

The 'voice' of the liturgical assembly can be fostered literally in the prayers we say together and the hymns we sing. We can also foster that 'voice' more broadly in the gestures we make together and the silences we share, for in their own ways, the gestures and silences also speak.

St Augustine experienced the power of the assembly's voice in the process of his conversion. The Church's singing touched his heart. In his Confessions he wrote, "How I wept, deeply moved by your

hymns, songs, and the voices that echoed through your Church! Those sounds flowed into my ears distilling the truth in my heart." May we feel anew the power of the assembly's voice in our day.



Most Reverend Paul Bird, CSsR is Bishop of the Diocese of Ballarat and a member of the Bishops

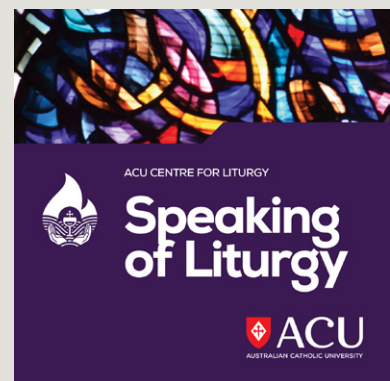
Commission for Liturgy of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

NEWS AND RECENT EVENTS

The ACU Centre for Liturgy has facilitated numerous events recently. Professor Johnson presented 'The Christian's Final Journey: Preparation and Celebration', a pastoral formation day on Catholic funerals in Sydney on February 9 and a workshop on 'Preparing and Celebrating Liturgy with Primary Aged Children' for the staff of Sacred Heart Primary School, Kew on March 10. During March, Dr Taylor met with clergy from the Diocese of Sandhurst. On April 29, Professor Johnson and Dr Taylor presented 'Be Not Afraid: Preparing and Celebrating Sacraments of Healing', a full day of formation for the Diocese of Ballarat. Professor Johnson presented professional learning sessions on 'Liturgy and Creating Liturgical Spaces' for primary and secondary teachers from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools on May 3 and May 17. She also facilitated a panel discussion

on liturgical music at the Melbourne Archdiocesan Clergy Conference on June 15 and taught THLS502 Liturgical Music on ACU's Melbourne Campus with guest presenters from July 3 – 6.

During May, the centre launched *Speaking of Liturgy*, a new podcast on various aspects of liturgy and liturgical arts, featuring Australian and international presenters. New episodes are being recorded and released on a regular basis and can be accessed at acu.edu.au/SpeakingofLiturgy. Cathy Murrowood produces the podcast, Stan Murrowood contributes voice-overs, and Amiel Matthews provides editing. The Centre welcomed Dr Lizette Larson-Miller for its May 8 online lecture "I am what I ritualise: identity, theology, and liturgy in a secular context". The centre's new online training program for Ministers of the Word also began in May, following a trial with participants



from the Bathurst Diocese. A similar program for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is running several times throughout 2023 with participants from across Australia and is being facilitated by Cathy Murrowood and Paul Taylor. Centre staff are preparing for an invitation-only scholarly symposium to mark the 60th anniversary of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on December 3 – 5, 2023.

LITURGY SPOTLIGHT

Recovering the assembly's voice

In these waning days of Covid 19, we are faced with the challenge of recovering the voice of our gathered assemblies. Certainly, one of the blessings of technology has been the opportunity to connect via Zoom or live streaming when the lockdown made it impossible to gather for worship in person. Now, however, we need to consider what we lose by continuing online and why it is important to return to in-person worship.

Zoom and live streaming silenced the

communal voice of our assemblies. This is not a judgment, but an acknowledgement of the limits of current technological resources. Only one voice can be heard at any one time on a computer microphone, and it is not possible to add one's voice to live streaming when participating online. A pre-Vatican II theology might not find this problematic since the subject of the liturgy, the one who did the liturgy, was the ordained priest. The congregation generally assumed the role of observers for the most part.

However, the Second Vatican Council teaches that the gathered assembly is the subject of the liturgy. The presider leads worship and prays on behalf of the assembly. But the assembly is meant to be an active participant in liturgical celebrations. Indeed, active participation was a primary goal of the liturgical reform. If that is true, it is essential that members of the gathered assembly experience themselves as active participants. Article 7 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy speaks of the

gathered assembly as a mode of Christ's presence. The other modes include Christ's presence in the presider, the word, the bread and wine, and the other sacraments. When the assembly gathers, it is united in gestures, in celebrating or handling symbols, and in giving voice to its faith through acclamations and full-throated song.

Worship is essentially a bodily activity and perhaps there is nothing that so fully involves the body as music-making. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM 2010, article 47) asserts that singing the opening hymn or chant fosters an experience of unity among those who have gathered for worship. This first action of the assembly – as gathered and gathering – can provide the assembly with a sense of itself as a communal body. As symbolising activity, the assembly's singing allows it to find its identity as people of faith and assists them in negotiating connections with each other and with God (see Kubicki, *The Presence of Christ*, 2006). When this happens, the assembly's singing enables it to experience itself as the presence of Christ. Recall Matthew 18:20: "Where two or three are

gathered in my name, there am I in their midst".

The gathered assembly can experience itself as one and as an instance of the presence of Christ by re-engaging in a celebration of liturgical symbols that generate meaning. Through this engagement (or re-engagement), the assembly is drawn into the liturgical action under the leadership of a presider. This activity enables the assembly in a direct and meaningful way to participate in the liturgical action as the presence of Christ for the world through their innate bodyliness.

The experience of unity is essential in mediating the presence of Christ when the assembly gathers. Making music, specifically the act of singing as a gathered assembly, promotes this experience in a powerfully tangible way. The ability to promote and experience unity and engagement in the liturgical action is significantly reduced when it is mediated by electronic devices. For this reason, people of faith need to come together so that they are present to each other in a shared space.

Rejuvenating a parish worship music program is part of the way of bringing people back to in-person worship. This does not mean putting on a show that people watch. It means creating a liturgical music program that invites and enables the assembly to sing. It involves carefully planning a repertoire that gives voice to the prayer and faith experience of actual people in the pews. And while there is always a place for volunteers and amateurs, a robust and meaningful music program needs a director with talent, training and education in both liturgical music and liturgical theology.



Judith M. Kubicki, CSSF, PhD is assistant professor emerita in the theology department of Fordham University, New York. She currently

serves as provincial minister of the Felician Sisters of North America.

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

Evoking sung prayer from the assembly



Image by Giovanni Portelli Photography

Strategies to strengthen the assembly's voice lie in employing effective liturgical music ministries and resources that foster the Church's vision of full, conscious and active participation. Here are a few specifics.

Presiding celebrants are really the 'prime movers' of the assembly's participation. To evoke sung prayer, presiders should try singing the invitations – singing presiders foster singing assemblies. Ministerial chants (e.g., the greeting, preface dialogue, Eucharistic acclamations, dialogues either side of the Gospel) will *always* prompt enough people to sing

the response – out of ritual courtesy. In some places, ministerial chant responses are accompanied, and this can be helpful in 're-orienting' the pitch for the congregation if the melody of the sung invitation moves away from the tonal or modal context, however, accompaniment is not essential.

Recovering the assembly's voice suggests the need to sing the Church's liturgy more than simply singing at the liturgy. It is important to tap into the liturgical songs 'on file' in the assembly's corporate memory. Consider hymns that are not just *generally* appropriate for the rite but

specifically appropriate, like those 'once-a-year' chants on Palm Sunday, Easter Vigil and carols at Christmas. Helping people think "Ah! – that song echoes the readings, or that text/tune is associated with the season/feast, or those words are based on the entrance/Communion antiphons". Recovering what is *proper* to the liturgical rite rather than routinely resorting to what is commonly known can help deepen full, conscious and active participation.

Finally, effective musical leadership by the clergy, cantor, choir and instrumentalists is key to facilitating sung prayer. Sung invitations based on notes that match the tonality of the response, encouraging gestures from the cantors and leaders of song that invite participation, vocal music that is not overamplified, and colourful and appropriate organ accompaniment that balances with the ensemble and people helps the assembly to find its voice again in offering God thankful praise.



Dr Paul Taylor is Assistant Director of the ACU Centre for Liturgy.

Engage our expertise

Online training programs for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Ministers of the Word

ACU Centre for Liturgy's innovative and comprehensive online training programs for **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion** and for **Ministers of the Word** incorporate live Zoom classes, extensive online learning resources, and interaction with your parish priest and a local practicum to prepare you for these special ministries. These rich and engaging programs are run multiple times a year and are supported by the Bishops Commission for Liturgy. See our website for future dates and enrolment.

Parish training and formation workshops

ACU Centre for Liturgy provides a variety of specialised training and formation workshops for parish ministers and liturgical musicians. We can provide detailed advice and specific strategies to improve liturgical celebrations in your parish through a comprehensive **liturgy or liturgical music audit**.

Professional development for teachers and religious education leaders

We tailor workshops and professional development sessions to extend knowledge of liturgical celebrations and sacramental preparation for 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 designed 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.



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The Liturgy Nexus and Liturgy Nexus for Schools

The Liturgy Nexus and Liturgy Nexus for Schools are online subscription-based closed networks run by the ACU Centre for Liturgy and designed for conversation on liturgical issues, resource sharing and problem solving. The Liturgy Nexus links postgraduate-qualified liturgists, current students of liturgy and those working in a liturgy-related profession, such as liturgical architecture, art or music (membership is granted to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria). The Liturgy Nexus for Schools links those preparing liturgical celebrations in school communities. To apply for membership or associate membership (depending on qualification level) of the Liturgy Nexus, or to join the Liturgy Nexus for Schools, see our website. Membership costs \$30 per year (not pro-rata), renewable on or before 1 March each year.

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 (tax-deductable over \$2) through the [Give Now](#) portal on our website. ACU is a not-for-profit institution, and 100% of your gift will be utilised to provide formative education in liturgy and sacraments in areas of need. Endowments, bequests and gifts in kind are welcome.

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ACU CENTRE FOR LITURGY

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