



WE ARE WHAT WE EAT:

HOW MUSICAL TEXTS SHAPE
THE THEOLOGY, PARADIGMS
AND VALUES OF THE FAITHFUL

BUILDING A PARISH REPERTOIRE
WITH TEXTS THAT TRULY FEED

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*How Musical Texts Shape the Theology,
Paradigms and Values of the Faithful---
Building a Parish Repertoire with
Musical Texts That Nourish and Embolden*

THESIS STATEMENT

For liturgical music to meet its goal of transforming the person, and the community experiencing it, there must be a solid, passionate marriage between the primal, ageless power of melody and the timeliness of forward-thinking lyrics. At it's best, this unity speaks ever more deeply and intelligently to the heart, mind, soul, and psyche of the person holding that music in their hands and being invited to bring it to their lips. The faithful who come to worship each week ought to be fed with a rich diet of enduring melodies and resonating lyrics that speak with the faithfulness, relevance and beauty that authenticity-hungry parishioners deserve, and good liturgy demands.

The Roman Catholic tradition is rich with soul-touching, time-and-style-enduring melodies, but the lyrics set to many of these melodies understandably reflect theological and pastoral paradigms which, though appropriate for their time, (hundreds, even thousands of years ago) are, in this third millennium, proposing concepts that do not adequately express contemporary theological understandings. Many are inconsistent with the pastoral implications of the Second Vatican Council. *Sound* good, they may. Make us *feel* good, they might. But if they do not challenge us to *do* good, they have not met their fullest purpose. Good liturgy, and all the elements which comprise it, is not merely about transcendence. At its best, it is about transformation. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #9-10)

BACKGROUND:

We Ministers of music pay (laudable) attention to the proficiency of our choirs and our instruments, the aesthetic beauty and dramatic power of our craft, and to the scriptural thrusts and seasonal movements that drive our liturgies. However, we may sometimes forget that alongside these noble tasks, and at their very core, is our elemental responsibility to feed the hungry faithful who come to our church table each week with rich, transformative sustenance. Not only are the words we sing in liturgy meant to be yoked to the scripture of the day, but, as they reinforce and illumine the same words we hear in the readings, they are as important in the nurturing and formation of one's faith as are the words we hear in scripture and homily. (*Inter Oecumenici*, 9/26, 1964 #7) Yes, a beautifully performed hymn may stir emotions with its power, lift us to an experience and appreciation of the Transcendent, and offer aesthetic delight. But if the words sung in that hymn do not transform and move us to a richer understanding of our relationship with God, who we are as church, and the costly challenges of the Gospel, then, as beautiful as it may be, that music has not reached its full potential and achieved its real purpose.

Project Dynamic:

The task of moving a parish music program toward its fullest potential begins with Observation, progresses to Theological Reflection, and culminates in Practice. This movement may also be expressed as Seeing > Judging > Acting. Another syntax for this process is expressed in the dynamic of Experience > Theory > Practice.

With this movement in mind, it is important to begin the conversation with the elemental question of OBSERVATION: What have we seen, observed, experienced, as the historical context of ritual singing? We then move to JUDGMENT: Why throughout the millennia have we sung? What elements and principles have shaped the power and efficacy of the music we have sung through the years, and will sing in the future? And we conclude with the question of PRACTICE: What kind of lyrics nurture a parish?

OBSERVATION/EXPERIENCE/Seeing

Part of our answer is found in the rich tradition of our 2000 years of Roman Catholic history. But the tradition that opens this dialog goes far beyond the era of Mozart, or Hildegarde, or Gregory, or even the ancient psalmist, David.

Prehistoric/Archetypal Experience: The Sound of Transcendence—The Source of Life

The tradition of ritual music goes beyond the *artistic* to the *archetypal*. It goes beyond the austerity of abbeys and the grandeur of cathedrals all the way to the 50-millenia-old caves of Lascaux, where the cave dwellers took their fears, their questions, their imaginings, and voiced them, not merely as cerebral queries, but, like the wolves that lived with them, and the winds that swirled through their encampments, as cries to the night sky, which so fascinated them. They imitated, reflected, the pounding of their hearts with percussive instruments. Instinctively, with flutes and horns, they added their breath to echo the choirs of birds and animals around them. (*The Origins of Music*, p.348) As they formed communities, they realized that the individual thoughts and feelings and yearnings they cherished in the face of the Mystery were not so uniquely individual after all. And the most natural thing to do was to raise their musings and their chants in harmony with the others who shared in their experiences.

As the human species evolved and civilizations developed, we can look to the 5-millennia-old ruins of Mesopotamian temples where archaeological evidence from ziggurats reveals images of shamen, priestesses, men and women, the enthusiastic young and wizened old, deeply imaginative and intelligent in their skillful passing on of the oral tradition that bound them. (*The World's Religions*, Nimian Smart, Cambridge University Press, p. 201). We see them gathered as a community to acknowledge the experience of the divine, the transcendent, the other-worldly. They revered a power to which they knew they were connected, compelled. They sang about a force identified with the very pulsing of their own heartbeat, a force that welled within their spirits, excited their imaginations, and begged for physical expression. (*The Origins of Music Edited by Nils L. Wallin, Björn Merker and Steven Brown*, pp 441-442). They needed more than mere cerebral imagination. They needed to voice their thoughts and feelings aloud.

The Judeo-Christian Heritage: The Word of Transcendence—The Food of life

As civilizations evolved from this early human experience of cave and kingdom communities, they developed a culture and a set of ritualized prayers and songs that expressed this simple and elemental mystery of, and connection to, the ineffable, the numinous, the Transcendent.

History tells us that Christianity's Hebraic ancestors of the first and second millennia BCE advanced the earthly/divine conversation by adding ever-more ritualized worship, and ever-more formalized *texts* to their sacred communal experiences. From ancient liturgy and texts we hear the stories of Abraham and the Covenant of the Hebrew people (ca. 2000 BCE), the Exodus (ca. 1200 BCE), and the period of David and the Israelite kings conquering and being conquered (ca. 1000 BCE to the time of the Common Era). The story is passed on from generation to generation by prophets and story-tellers, men and women commissioned to be keepers of the community's narrative, and charged to feed the people with the word of God. Each time that the people of Israel found themselves faltering in their Covenant with God, these scriptures tell us that men and women were called forth from the people to *re-mind* them of their story, the experience of God's faithfulness to them, and their promise to God.

To do this re-minding, scripture recounts for us that it was not always the "perfect" spokespersons who were so inspired. Often, as in the case of the psalmist King David, it was well-intentioned, but clearly flawed humans who are called to bring to the community the spiritual sustenance and challenges of poetic expression and story-telling that become for those who hear, the food of God's Word. From David we have 73 of the Hebrew Scripture's 150 psalms, chants accompanied by lyre, musical poems of lament, praise, exhortation, thanksgiving and wisdom. Particularly evocative as poems of God's food are David's Psalm 34 ("Taste and see the Goodness of the Lord"), Psalms 19 and 119, "(The word of God is... sweeter also than honey or drippings from the comb)" and, in the Christian Scriptures, John's Revelations' reference to "eating the word of the Lord, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the stomach," each evoking the theme of God's word and spirit as food, sustenance not only for the individual, but for the soul of the nation as well.

As Jewish kingdoms rose and fell, from David through the decades of the Jewish Captivity and Exile, on to the succession of foreign occupations that followed the division of Israel into two kingdoms, prophets reiterated God's plea that the people eat of God's Word:

From the 55th chapter of Isaiah we hear the invitation:

All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; Come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life. I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David. (Isaiah 55: 1-3).

The poetry of these prophetic texts grows ever more compelling as God exhorts prophets like Ezekiel to EAT the very scrolls upon which God's word is written. The prophet is so nurtured by the Word of God that it is that *Word*, and not merely *bread*, which sustains him, and in turn, the people to whom he speaks.

"Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you" (Ezekiel 2:8)

Even in Jesus' time, a full 1000 years into the formalized Jewish tradition of ritual music, there was a sense that the cries of "Holy is God most high" that echoed through the streets of Jerusalem at his arrival were not merely an intellectual and cultural assent to some theological concept. As Luke recounts in his version of Jesus' entry in his 19th chapter, verse 40, "On hearing the chanting of the crowds 'Blessed is the One who comes in God's name!' the Pharisees demanded that Jesus rebuke the people. He answered 'I tell you, if they were to remain silent, the very stones would cry out!'"

From the caves of Lascaux, the coasts of Mesopotamia, the countryside of Jerusalem, the Cathedrals of Cologne, the primal cry to, and loving invitation from, the Transcendent has been, and remains, as strident as ever. And, as the human species evolves, so will be the expression of that crying out and our understanding of that invitation. This Master's Project endeavors to serve to the people of God the best of musical food by marrying time-proven powerful melodies with forward moving texts that most authentically express our species' ever-evolving understanding of who we are and how we relate *with* and *to* the divine. It integrates knowledge acquired through courses in Lay Ecclesial and Pastoral Ministry; Models of the Church; Hebrew and Christian Scripture; Grace, Christ and Spirit; Ethics; Evangelization; Catechesis; Catholic Social Teaching; and Contemporary Church History.

The path to this movement begins with Observation (SEEING), progressing to Theological Reflection (JUDGING), and culminating in Practice (ACTING). The Theological Reflection dimension of this project will be an exploration of the various Roman Catholic Church documents that have both reflected and informed the theological principles that stand today as post-modern paradigms of ecclesial thought. As Paul reminds us in his first letter to Timothy, 4: 16, "*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*" –1 Timothy 4:16.

NOTE: The basic supposition of the following section of this project is a development of the writings of Karl Barth and Hans Küng's concept of "ecclesia semper reformanda." The church is, by its very nature, an ever-changing and vital organism that will always be in need of self-reflection and reform. (My Struggle for Freedom: Memoirs, by Hans Küng, 2003, p 167; and Unitatis Redintegratio, the Decree on Ecumenism,#6.)

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: JUDGING/TRADITION
THE SHAPING OF MUSICAL TEXTS:
Theological Principles and Roman Catholic Church Documents:**

Since this project seeks to marry traditional tunes with contemporary texts, it is important to discuss the essential principles that mark contemporary theology. Although theological inquiry has been in no way on hiatus since the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the seminal work of scholars in the 1940's and 1950's that prepared for and shaped the principles espoused at that historic Council (1962-1965) still continue to inspire present day theologians.

Jesuit Henri DeLubac institutionalized the study of Ecclesiology—the examination of the social-cultural nature of church. Dominican Edward Schillebeckx raised Christology from a discipline that formerly dealt with defining heresy to a passionate inquiry into the complex nature of Jesus, and the Love of God Incarnate. Jesuit Augustine Bea developed a sociological/historical approach to scripture, which planted the seeds for future Ecumenical efforts. Dominican father Yves Congar produced brilliant studies of the sacraments that introduced the concepts of the universal call, lay and cleric alike, to holiness. Jesuit anthropologist and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin brought these sciences into the realm of spiritual thought. Hans Küng brought the fields of history, sociology and political theory into the theological conversation, especially in his important pre-Conciliar work, *The Beginning of All Things - Science and Religion*. And the insights of Jesuit father Karl Rahner on Grace as the natural state of all creation set the stage for a refreshing and dramatic review of the Catholic doctrine and practice.

These framers of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council understood and sought to bring to new light the simple awareness that God's presence infuses and pervades all creation (*Dei Verbum*, #3, #6) They promoted the idea that creation and revelation (*Dei Verbum*, #4,) far from static experiences that ended “on the seventh day,” or, with the Apostles, are, rather, ongoing, dynamic, creative processes. (*Dei Verbum*, # 7-8.)

That simple understanding of the direct and awesome infusion of the Divine in all endeavors of creation, in all human activity, suffuses four documents from the Vatican Council and one composed by the US Council of Catholic Bishops 10 years later. These documents shaped the pastoral and liturgical sensitivities that ought to drive the vision of a parish music program: *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, (Dei Verbum,)* and, from the USCCB, *Music in Catholic Worship*.

Though not characterized as Liturgical Documents, *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Dei Verbum* offered such a dramatic revisioning of how humanity fits into the scheme of Creation that their insights clearly impacted both the philosophy and practicality of all aspects of a parish music program, especially the lyrical content of liturgical music. Three basic premises inform these documents, and the theologians who wrote them.

n□ All Creation is inextricably connected to the Creator in a bond of creative love.(*GS# 39 & DV #2*) This basic principle follows from two important assumptions:

- a.) the earth, its creatures, and all humans are, as reflections of God's unbounded love (*DV #2*) and limitless imagination, inherently, and unavoidably GOOD, and, as creations of God, worthy of the utmost respect
- b.) there is in all Creation, as espoused by Teilhard de Chardin in his pre-conciliar work *The Divine Millieu*, and Karl Barth, in his 1960 essays *The Humanity of God*, an inherent sacramentality.

n□ The Incarnation of Christ (*GS #38*) establishes a new paradigm of service and priesthood, a reordering through which *all* who are baptized (*LG #7*) into the People of God, not merely the ordained, are called to priesthood in Christ.(*LG # 10-11; SC # 14 & 26; Presbyterorum Ordinis (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, #2)*)

n□ The work of the Father's Creation, the Son's Redemption, and the Spirit's Revelation is an ongoing process, never static, always dynamic in its forward movement. *(GS #38)*

All these principles impact the vision of a parish music program, and the vocabulary and syntax we use to express faith.

From a post-conciliar perspective, liturgy is not about the manufacture or creation of a connection with God. Rather, it is about our self-exposed, vulnerable surrendering to God's connection with us-- just as God, with the invitation of a spendthrift lover, has surrendered the Divine *(DV#2)* to us. In liturgy, we don't make ourselves more spiritual. Rather, we allow the omnipresent Spirit to embrace us, envelop us, penetrate us, remind us of our inherent Godliness, and call us to our fullest humanness. *(GS #39)*

There was a time when, and there are still places where, the intersection of flesh and spirit is seen as the natural state. Our modern world does not appear to be as comfortable with that intersection. In Western philosophy, there has been a 3000-year favoring of the dualistic platform of spirit vs. flesh. Yes, Catholic imagination has always held the primacy of the Incarnation, the joyful enfleshment of God in the human experience, the familial connection between God and all creation, the vine and the branches, the Bride and the bridegroom (talk about enfleshment)! *(LG #7)* But our Catholic culture's Hellenistic roots, especially as nurtured by Augustine, Jerome and Aquinas, were planted in clearly duality-prone soil, and the ethereal is often drawn and taught as being more noble than (and counter to) the earthly. *(GS #39)*

A healthy parish music program that offers musical texts conscientiously chosen for their theological faithfulness will assume and communicate an inherent, not earned, divine relationship, and speak of a resonance that need not be restored, but, rather, reawakened and accessed. A fundamental principle for building such a music program would be a an informed and sensitive pastoral awareness in the selection of musical settings and lyrics, and the

supervising of music ministers hired for their ability to authentically express and communicate that joyful, genuine, heartfelt, uninhibited sense of divine/human interaction that is the very nature of liturgy. For it is in liturgy that, through the simplest vehicle of the embodied senses, we are called to reconciliation, and integration of our fully human, fully divine natures. As expressed in Pope Benedict's recent encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, "The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity. These duties pre-suppose each other, and are inseparable." If there is no "So What?" no earthly reflection of the divine experience, then there is an ineffectual liturgy, and a missed opportunity for the community to be invited into participating in God's work of renewing the face of the earth.

Our Catholic heritage is rich with beautifully crafted, truly accessible and nearly universally known hymn tunes, but the lyrics associated with those hymns often reflect theological and pastoral paradigms which are now in this third millennium, proposing concepts that ignore contemporary theological understandings and constructs and are sometimes inconsistent with the pastoral implications of Vatican II. The intent of this Master's project is to take these archetypically powerful tunes already familiar and dear to congregations, and compose lyrics for them that reflect the best of our current human understanding of our selves and our relationship to the divine. The intent is to create renewed hymns that answer the challenge of Micah: "What kind of worship does God seek? Only that you do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God." (*Micah 6:8*)

In Sacrosanctum Concilium, "The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," the church reminded us that the purpose of liturgy is to infuse the vitality of God into the lives of the faithful, so that, nurtured by that sustenance, the faithful might in turn feed the hungry of the world with the food of God's love, "the Mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church." As the Catholic Bishops later so vividly put it in their 1972 document *Music in Catholic Worship*: "People in love make signs of love, not only to express their love but also to deepen it. Love never expressed, dies. Christians' faith in Christ and in each other must be expressed in the signs and symbols of celebration, or it will die... "Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken and destroy it."(MCW #6.)

The task of a minister of music is to be so well grounded in the complex mixture of scriptural, pastoral, ethical, catechetical, evangelical, liturgical, theological and historical principles upon which this ministry is founded, and from which it springs, that they can not help but prepare and present celebrations that richly feed the faith of those who come to worship. The proof of the success of such an endeavor will be seen not only in an increasing vitality of the communal singing, but, over time, in a renewal of palpable expression of commitment to the Gospel. Such expressions would include an increase of participation in, and leadership of, social justice programs, a growth in parish and community voluntarism, an expansion of interest in scripture study and adult faith formation, and an intensification of parish sacramental preparation programs, especially RCIA.

An even more immediately tangible measurement of the effectiveness of this process might be the offering of seasonal hymn festivals in which newly-composed lyrics to favorite Advent and Lenten hymn tunes could be introduced in a side-by-side singing comparison. In this way, the assembly would be able to experience the benefits of the new lyrics even before the “theory and theological reflection” are drawn out from the conversation that would follow the introduction of the new texts.

The Beauty and Power of Traditional Tunes

This cheery recounting of the revisioning initiated by the framers of Vatican II should not lead the reader to think that the Council fathers were suggesting that all things pre-1962 ought to be summarily discarded and buried. Indeed, it is important to remember that, in the mix and at the foundation of the forward-moving thrust of conciliar thought is a deep reverence for the authentic power and beauty of tradition. (DV #8-10) The call of the Council was for the church to examine itself critically, honestly assessing its fidelity to the fundamental principles of its tradition, while bringing that tradition into genuine engagement with the world. (DV #8) The hope of the Council was to immerse the church as the people of God (GS #38) fully into the world, a world in need of both its foresight, and its hindsight, its progressive movement to the future, and its solid rooting in history. (Spiritus Domini, 4/16/70, #69)

With this marriage of progression and tradition in mind, I present here nine traditional melodies that have stood the test of time and proven their enduring power and grace, and, in side-by-side comparison, new lyrics that I have composed for them, reflecting the sometimes subtly nuanced, sometimes strikingly innovative, perspectives of contemporary theology and Christology. To underscore this reverence for the past, four genres of tunes that reflect the tonal repertoire of the ever-evolving Church have been chosen: 1.) Chants from the 8th and 13th centuries (Parce Domine and Adoro te Devote), 2.) traditional 19th century hymn tunes (Hyfrydol, Lambilotte), 3.) traditional secular folk tunes from Scotland (O Waly Waly), Ireland (Dohmnach Trionoide), Brittain (Land of Rest, Pleading Savior) and 4.) a “new classical” tune from Antonin Dvorak’s New World Symphony, inspired, though not derivative of, Native American and Negro Spiritual music of America.

This choosing of four different musical forms for lyric recomposition is an intentional strategy to show not only a reverence for the tunes and the increased vitality afforded them by the fitting of new lyrics for them, but to illustrate how the forms themselves become more versatile and long-lived when partnered with new lyrics. Chant, typically reserved in the past for choirs, can be offered as a powerful vehicle for lay people to pray. Widely known “traditional” hymns usually associated with obtuse, anachronistic language and outdated theological paradigms may be used to carry and communicate contemporary themes. And, archetypically powerful and evocative secular tunes that have stood the test of time can become truly comforting vehicles for spiritually substantial and nourishing texts.

The providing of a wide palate of different musical forms in liturgy (i.e. chant, antiphonal call and response, acclamation, strophic hymn, air, canon, ostinato, ballad, motet, etc.) is important because liturgies themselves are integrations of various rituals, movements and moods that warrant discreet, distinct musical forms to support the ritual function. For example, a strophic hymn form, with its pulse and march-like qualities, is a good fit for the mood and feel of entrance and exit processions, but not appropriate for a more reflective part of the liturgy like the reception of communion or the ritual of “bringing up the gifts.”

So, two intertwining questions arise: Why do we worship...and, from that “why,” How do we worship?

I would suggest that, in order to answer these with consciousness, authenticity and wisdom, we need to ask, and answer, some more elemental initial queries. Do we fear God, or hold the Creator in loving awe? Is the God we experience drawn as someone “up there” or “present in our very midst?” Does God need worship? Or deeds of justice? Or Both? Is the Kingdom to come, or at hand? Are we in the state of connection with God, or of alienation? Is God our Ultimate, or our Intimate, the distant, or the immanent? Is liturgy an exercise of spirit or flesh---or both? Transcendence or transformation-- or both?

The Catholic imagination, in its many manifestations and rites, is rich with appreciation of this curious dynamic of “both/and.” In this context, if liturgy is the crucible in which we, as a species, as a people, as a family, as individuals, integrate the worlds of flesh and spirit, contemplation and action, present- yet- to- come; then the music which flows from that experience must be of an earthly/divine, both/and admixture as well. It ought to acknowledge the fundamental grace of the past, and the inescapable power of the future. The words we sing are as much a part of our faith formation as are the words we hear in scripture, ritual prayer and homily. The ancient Latin adage “quod orandi, quod credendi,” holds true today: What we pray becomes what we believe.

These new lyrics are presented as a conversation, intended to reflect the grace of “both/and,” both traditional and new. Thus, it is very important to underscore the principle that whatever distinctions are made between older and newer lyrics, such comparisons are made neither to discredit the traditional writers, nor to discount the value of the earlier texts and their impact on the faith lives of hymnal users of their times and throughout the years. Rather, the contrasts are offered in order to acknowledge and honor the elemental differences in the contexts and intentions of the old and the new texts.

**PRACTICE: Moving from TRADITION to
PASTORAL ACTION**

Ancient Chant Tunes

Parce Domine



The image shows two staves of musical notation for the chant 'Parce Domine'. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of text: 'Parce Do-mi-ne, parce po-pu-lo tu-o:'. The second staff contains the melody for the second line of text: 'ne in aeter-num i-ra-sca-ris no-bis.'. The notation uses square neumes on a four-line staff, with a clef at the beginning of each staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Composed in the 8th century, at the height of the papacy of St. Gregory, patron of “Gregorian” chant, this piece is written using a scale defined as Chant Mode I. This particular mode, one of eight different chant patterns based on the ancient Greek tonal system featuring 8 tones with varying and distinguishing audibly discerned “distances” or “steps” between them, is called the Dorian Mode. The pattern of whole steps (what modern ears would hear as the movement in the familiar scale from Doh to Re) and half steps (as in Mi to Fah) unique to this mode is: Whole---Half-- Whole—Whole—Whole--Half—Whole. In the case of *Parce Domine*, where the root (tonic note) of the scale is G, the succession is: G-A-Bb-C-D-E-F-G and features D as the dominant or most insistent tone.

This Mode has a particularly haunting, lamenting sense to it. Even if one does not play an instrument, one can experience this sound by locating D on a keyboard (D is the white key between the pair of two black keys in any octave on the keyboard) and simply playing the white keys in succession from D to D.

The lyrics originally set to this pattern were drawn from the Book of Joel, Chapter 2, verse 17 “Spare, O Lord, spare thy people, and let not your anger be with us forever,” and from Psalm 51 “Create in me, O God, a clean heart.” This plea was offered to God by Joel at a time when the people of Israel were suffering from an infestation of locusts, and their crops were failing. The

entreaty to God assumes an uber-parental relationship with God, even a puppeteering-type, *Deus ex Machina*-style relationship where God sits in heaven, manipulating the forces of nature to reward or punish the children who do or do not live according to his wishes. The verses do acknowledge the failures and frailty of humankind, but in generalities only, and they do not offer alternatives to the offensive behavior. They are replete with “we have sinned against you. . .” but there is no qualification of what the sin is, and no statement of willingness to explore the behavior and make changes.

Given the haunting and repentant nature of this original melody, other composers, such as Gary Daigle and Rory Cooney in their “Hold Us in Your Mercy” have also set variations to this Parce motif. Where this melodic interpolation and lyric composition presented here differs is in its intention to speak not only to the vertical notion of God offering forgiveness (“Let us *see* your mercy”), but to the horizontal notion of our reflecting that forgiveness and mercy in our relationship with others (“Let us *be* your mercy.”)

Additionally, since the very opening rite of the Mass in Catholic liturgy is the Penitential Rite, I’ve offered here a setting for that rite built on the precedent of the Parce Domine/ Kyrie Eleison/Lord have Mercy motifs of tradition. However, I have integrated into that rite, references to the scriptural readings that will be proclaimed and reflected on in the Liturgy of the Word for which the Penitential Rite is the immediate preparation. It should be noted that this integration of penitential rite with specific weekly readings is a departure from the official Roman Sacramentary which offers in its forms A, B, and C, a year-round non-reading-specific formula of litany (Kyrie) and confession (Confiteor). This modification of lyrics and integration of scriptural references holds two intentions: first, since we place at the core of Christian faith our belief in a God defined as all merciful, we ought to move from a mere plea *asking* of God for mercy, on to a petition that we *acknowledge* God’s constant and all embracing attitude of mercy and compassion for all creation. Second, we should maximize the instruction of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures as illumination of how we might *become* the incarnated experience of God’s mercy in our relationship with each other. The verses composed here reference and reflect the scriptural texts for the first three weeks of Lent, Cycle B. In week 1, Genesis recounts the Covenant of God and man, Peter’s letter reminds us of God’s unfailing love, and Mark recounts for us Jesus’ call to realize that the Kingdom is not in the future, but at hand, present now. Week two brings us the story of Abraham

and Isaac, Paul’s “if God is for us,” and Mark’s account of the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain. In week three, we hear from Exodus the giving of the commandments, from Paul, the “foolishness of God’s love,” and, from Mark, the zeal of Jesus for authentic worship as he dispels the sellers in the Temple.

Let Us See Your Mercy: Parce Domine= Chant Mode I, 8th Century

Text: Original Latin, 8th Century

Refrain:

Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo:
ne in aeternum irascaris nobis.

1. Flectamus iram vindicem,
Ploremus ante Judicem;
Clamemus ore supplici,
Dicamus omnes cernui:Refrain
2. Nostris malis offendimus
Tuam Deus clementiam
Effunde nobis desuper
Remissor indulgentiam.
Refrain

3. Dans tempus acceptabile,
Da lacrimarum rivulis
Lavare cordis victimam,
Quam laeta adurat caritas.
Refrain

4. Audi, benigne Conditor,
Nostras preces cum fletibus
In hoc sacro jejunio,
Fusas quadragenario.

Text: Translation: The Grail, 1963

Refrain:

Spare, O Lord, spare your people,
and do not hold us forever in anger.

1. Have mercy on me God, in your
goodness,
In your compassion, wipe out my offense.

Refrain:

2. O cleanse me more and more from my
guilt
And wash me from my sin.

Refrain:

3. My offences, truly I know them,
and my sin is always before me.

Refrain:

4. Against you alone have I sinned,
and what is evil in your sight I have done.

Refrain:

5. A pure heart create in me, O God.
Put a steadfast spirit within me.

Refrain:

Text: Rob Grant, 2006

Refrain:

Let us see your mercy! Let us be your mercy!

First Sunday Of Lent Cycle B

God of compassion,
We come to you this day, As we begin our Lenten journey--
Open our eyes, that we may see the richness
of our Covenant with you. *Refrain:*

God of all healing,
You who know our strengths, And all our deepest woundings,
Lead us to wholeness, of body, mind and spirit. *Refrain*

Christ, loving teacher,
You show us how to pray, to fast, and care for those in need.
Open our hearts, that we may show your Kingdom is at hand.
.....*Refrain:*

Second Sunday Of Lent Cycle B

God of Creation,
We come to you this day, So hungry for your presence.
Let us be open to your welcoming forgiveness *Refrain:*

Christ of the Mountain,
Who calls us with such love, to see your holy will in all--
Lead us to find you in every breath we take. *Refrain:*

God ever present,
revealed to us today In all your grace and glory---
Lead us to see you, in the midst of all our daily busyness
.....*Refrain:*

Third Sunday Of Lent Cycle B

God of Creation,
We come to you this day, So longing to know your will.
Open our eyes, that we may see the path to you. *Refrain:*

Christ of the Temple,
You who knew your purpose, And all that you were born to
be,
Open our ears, that we may hear your calling. *Refrain:*

God, source of true life,
whose Son shows us today, His passion for integrity--
Mav our bond with you be ever more rich and real. *Refrain:*

Lenten Penitential Rite: Let Us See Your Mercy--

Cycle A: Week Five--Raising of Lazarus

TUNE: Parce Domine

♩ = 90



Lyrics: Rob Grant

Refrain **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **Bm/Am/Em**

Cantor

 Let us see your mer - cy *Let us see your mer - cy.* Let us be your mer - cy *Let us be your mer - cy.*
 (Italic type: Assembly's Response to Cantor's Invitation)



Verse 1 **Em** **C** **D** **Bm** **C(add 9)**


 God of the - liv - ing, we come to you this day, a - ware of our deep wound ed - ness:

 Let - us be open - to your life - giv - ing com - pass - ion

Refrain **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **Bm/Am/Em**


 Let us see your mer - cy *Let us see your mer - cy.* Let us be your mer - cy *Let us be your mer - cy.*


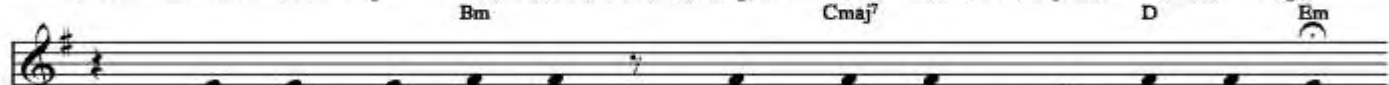
Verse 2 **Em** **C** **D** **Bm** **C(add 9)**


 God e - ver pre - sent re - vealed to us to - day, as One who brings true life to all:

 Teach us to hold the pre - cious - ness of life!

Refrain **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **Bm/Am/Em**


 Let us see your mer - cy *Let us see your mer - cy.* Let us be your mer - cy *Let us be your mer - cy.*

Verse 3 **Em** **C** **D** **Bm** **C(add 9)**


 God of all heal - ing You who know our strengths, and all our deep - est wound - ings.

 Lead us to whole - ness of bod - y mind and spir - it

Refrain **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **Em** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** **D** **Bm/Am/Em**


 Let us see your mer - cy *Let us see your mer - cy.* Let us be your mer - cy *Let us be your mer - cy.*

Lenten Gospel Acclamation

Cycle A: Week Five--Raising of Lazarus

Lyrics: Rob Grant

TUNE: Parce Domine

Refrain **Em** Cantor **D** **C(add 9)** **Em** Assembly **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** Cantor **D** **Bm** **C(add 9)** Assembly **D** **Bm** / **Am/Em**

Praise to you, Christ Je - sus! *Praise to you, Christ Je - sus!* King of end-less glo - ry! *King of end-less glo - ry!*

(Italic type: Assembly's Response to Cantor's Invitation)

Verse 1 **Cmaj7** Cantor **D** **Bm**

I am the Res - ur - rec - tion, says the Lord, who - ever - be - lieves

C(add 9) **D** **C(add 9)** **Cmaj7** **D** **BmSus/Em**

in me, e - ven if he die, he shall live for - e - ver.

Refrain **Em** Cantor **D** **C(add 9)** **Em** Assembly **D** **C(add 9)** **C(add 9)** Cantor **D** **Bm** **C(add 9)** Assembly **D** **Bm** / **Am/Em**

Praise to you, Christ Je - sus! *Praise to you, Christ Je - sus!* King of end-less glo - ry! *King of end-less glo - ry!*

Adoro Te Devote

5. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS † 1274



A -Dóro te devó-te, látens Dé-i-tas, Quæ sub his
figú-ris vere lá-ti-tas: Tí-bi se cor mé-um tótum
súbjicit, Qui-a te contémp-lans tó-tum dé-fi-cit.

Both the text and the music of this staple of Catholic Eucharistic devotion were written in the 13th century. The Latin lyrics are directly from the hand St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) composed in honor of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament at the request of Pope Urban IV when he first established the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1264.

Though scholars are unsure of its origin, this chant's tonal/harmonic quality is brighter and lighter than most others of this period, with a smooth and lyrical line of four phrases, including a swell in the third phrase that provides quiet drama while never losing its discipline. In a departure from "pure" chant, it is surprisingly nearly metrical, with repeated patterned cadences and rhythm that mark it as a movement toward the more conventional notion of "hymn" or "song." This is in contrast to the typical irregular chant style that was based not on intentional poetic patterns, but on the unpredictable line length of biblical passages.

This chant is written using a scale defined as Chant Mode V, the Lydian mode, where the pattern begins and ends with the note F, and features C as the dominant or most insistent tone. In the Lydian mode (closely related to modern tonal pattern referred to as the key of F Major) there are full steps between the first three notes, followed by a half step, in turn followed by another three full steps and ending with a half step.

So compelling is the melody, and so central the text to Catholic Eucharistic theology, that the Latin text has been translated into nearly every language, with more than 25 versions in English alone.

The very commissioning of the initial text of Aquinas by Pope Urban IV is a wonderful illustration of how hymn texts become an important part of catechesis of the faithful in the Christological and Theological understanding of whatever time they appear. At the time of his Papacy, Pope Urban IV discerned that centuries of focus on scripture and law as the “visible” signs of God had to a great extent relegated the Eucharist to a symbol of Christ’s past and distant sacrifice, so mysterious and inaccessible, that reception of the Body of Christ was reserved primarily for consecrated priests and religious, and appropriate to the general faithful as little as once a year. He discerned that though there was a fascination with the Eucharist among the faithful, there was for the faithful no real outlet for expression of that interest. To meet that need, he established the feast of Corpus Christi, the Body of Christ, and initiated the ritual of adoration of the Sacrament as a devotional exercise. And he commissioned Aquinas to write his *Adoro Te*.

In the centuries following the establishing of the adoration ritual, “official” teachings of the church offered no discouragement of frequent communion, but the faithful held dearly on to the notion of the unworthiness of humans to receive. Even religious nuns and brothers who attended daily Mass limited their reception to once a month.

It was not until 1905 when Pope Pius X issued the encyclical *Sacra Tridentina* encouraging the daily reception of the Eucharist that practice began to come close to teaching, and reception began to replace adoration as the expression of Eucharistic devotion.

Further understanding and evolving catechesis reinforced the notion of the Eucharist as the living presence of Christ and His gift as food for the sustenance of all. This sense of the Eucharist as a living presence is articulated beautifully by Nathan Mitchell, writing in *Commonweal* (1/27/95) that “consecrated bread and wine is not some-thing, but some-one. In the Eucharist, Christ is

present not as an ‘object’ to be admired, but as a person (a ‘subject’) to be encountered.... The ultimate intent of celebrating Eucharist is not to produce the sacred species for reservation or adoration, but to create the united body of Christ which is the church. With this understanding, Christ’s body is not only *on* the table, but *at* the table. Christ is to be worshiped, but Christ is also to be received, broken and shared for the salvation of the world.”

Such sentiments richly reflect the Conciliar documents *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in their challenge for the Church to see itself as a vested and vital participant in the movement of the world, not merely a dispassionate observer, or, equally not in the imitation of Christ, merely a distant and arbitrary legislator and judge of that movement.

So, as the 13th, 19th and 21st century sequence of *Adoro Te Devote* texts indicate, we move as an ever-evolving People of God, witnessing our insight into the unfolding mystery of God’s love maturing and growing even as we, the human species, do. The comparative lyrics show first the 1285 Latin text of Aquinas, followed by the beautiful and powerful mystical text of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1887), ending with the translation/rewrite of 2007. The lyrics proposed are not meant to replace the quintessential translation of Hopkins, to “improve” the spirituality or mystical quality of the piece, as it is doubtful anything can. Nor is the intention to simply make it “relevant” to present day ears. Each text has a distinct purpose. Where Hopkins’ mystical beauty and poetic brilliance serve the purpose of ardently reflective Eucharistic devotion, the new text is written to offer the singer and hearer an additional challenge to take the powerful energy of adoration as the impetus for dynamic movement on the Contemplation/Action equation.

Adoro te Devote= Tune=Benedictine Plainchant, 13th Century

Text: St. Thomas Aquinas (1225)

Adoro Te Devote

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas, Quæ sub his figuris vere latitas;
Tibi se cor meum totum subjicit, Quia te contemplans totum deficit.

Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur, Sed auditu solo tuto creditur.
Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius; Nil hoc verbo veritatis verius.

In cruce latebat sola Deitas, At hic latet simul et Humanitas,
Ambo tamen credens atque confitens, Peto quod petivit latro pœnitens.

Plagas, sicut Thomas, non intueor: Deum tamen meum te confiteor.
Fac me tibi semper magis credere, In te spem habere, te diligere.

O memoriale mortis Domini! Panis vivus, vitam præstans homini!
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere, Et te illi semper dulce sapere.

Pie Pelicane, Jesu Domine, Me immundum munda tuo sanguine:
Cujus una stilla salvum facere Totum mundum quit ab omni scelere.

Jesu, quem velatum nunc aspicio, Oro, fiat illud quod tam sitio:
Ut te revelata cernens facie, Visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ. Amen

Text: Gerard Manley Hopkins (1887)

Humbly Lord We Worship You

Godhead here in hiding, whom I do adore,
Masked by these bare shadows, shape and nothing more,
See, Lord, at Thy service low lies here a heart
Lost, all lost in wonder at the God thou art.

Seeing, touching, tasting are in thee deceived:
How says trusty hearing? That shall be believed;
What God's Son has told me, take for truth I do;
Truth Himself speaks truly or there's nothing true.

=

On the cross Thy godhead made no sign to men,
Here Thy very manhood steals from human ken:
Both are my confession, both are my belief,
And I pray the prayer of the dying thief.

I am not like Thomas, wounds I cannot see,
But can plainly call thee Lord and God as he;
Let me to a deeper faith daily nearer move,
Daily make me harder hope and dearer love.

O thou our reminder of Christ crucified,
Living Bread, the life of us for whom he died,
Lend this life to me then: feed and feast my mind,
There be thou the sweetness man was meant to find.

Bring the tender tale true of the Pelican;
Bathe me, Jesu Lord, in what Thy bosom ran
Blood whereof a single drop has power to win
All the world forgiveness of its world of sin.

Jesu, whom I look at shrouded here below,
I beseech thee send me what I thirst for so,
Some day to gaze on thee face to face in light
And be blest for ever with Thy glory's sight. Amen.

Text: Rob Grant (2006)

Loving God, You Call Us

Loving God, you call us, to this table now,
Here to know your presence, as in awe we bow.
Here your gift, Incarnate, earthly and divine,
Here, the wonder of your Love, in this bread and wine

Senses find their limits here, touch and taste and sight,
Faith alone unfolds you, and our souls delight.
As we hear your parting words: "Take and eat of me,"
Joining sense with spirit, we, the blind, may see.

On the cross, divinity hid its pow'r and might.
And here, your true humanity, challenges our sight.
Yet we trust your promise: Word and flesh meet here.
And as the thief who died with you, we "Lord and God" declare.

How I wish, like Thomas, your risen face to see.
Though, unseen, I call you, Lord and God as he;
Lead me on this journey, to faith, more rich and real,
Walking with you on the road, with hope and love that heal.

Bread and wine reminder, of Christ's sacrifice.
Blessed, broken, shared for all, gift without a price.
Open now my guarded heart, my stubborn will, unbend,
That refreshed with heaven's food, earth's brokenness I mend.

Jesus, whom with eyes I see, as this meal we share,
Fill me with your life, your love, food so rich and rare.
So that when my days are done, I take my final rest,
Yours will be the face I see, at that table blest.

Adoro Te Devote/Loving God You Call Us

Lyrics: Rob Grant

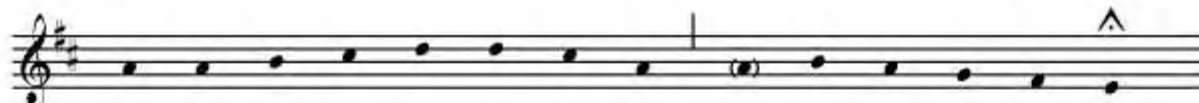
Tune: Adoro te Devote—St. Thomas Aquinas



1. A - dó - ro te de - vo - te, la - tens Dé - i - tas,
2. Lov - ing God, you call us here, to this ta - ble now.
3. Sen - ses find their lim - its here, touch and taste and sight.
4. On the cross, di - vin - i - ty hid its pow'r and might.
5. How I wish, like Thom - as, your ris - en face to see.
6. Bread and wine, re - min - der, of Christ's sac - ri - fice.
7. Je - sus, whom with eyes I see, at this meal we share.



1. Quae sub his fi - gú - ris ver - re - lá - ti - tas;
2. Here to know your pres - ence, as in awe we bow.
3. Faith a - lone un - folds you and our souls de - light.
4. Here, your true hu - man - i - ty, chal - len - ges our sight.
5. Though un - seen, I call you, "Lord and God" as he,
6. Blest, bro - ken, shared for all, gift with - out a price.
7. Fill me with your life, your love, food so rich and rare.



1. Ti - bi - se cor me - um to tum sub ji cit,
2. Here your gift. In - car - nate, earth ly and di vine.
3. As we hear your part - ing words "Take and eat of me."
4. Yet we trust your pro - mise: God and man meet here.
5. Lead me on this jour - ney, to faith, more rich and real.
6. O - pen now my guard - ed heart, my stub born will, un bend
7. So that when my days are done, I take my fi nal rest.



1. Qui - a te con - tem - plans to - tum de - fi - cit.
2. Here, the won - der of your Love, in this bread and wine.
3. Join - ing sense with spir - it, we, the blind may see.
4. And as the thief who died with you, we "Lord and God" de - clare.
5. Walk - ing with you on the road, with hope and love that heal.
6. That re - freshed with hea - ven's food earth's bro - ken - ness I mend.
7. Yours will be the face I see, at that ta - ble blest. A - men.

TUNE: Adoro Te Devote

ORIGINAL LATIN TEXT: St. Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274

ENGLISH TEXT ADAPTION: Copyright © 2007, by Rob Grant, All rights reserved

19th Century Traditional Hymn Tunes

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (Hyfrydol Tune)

In contrast to *Adoro Te*, a single tune for which countless texts have been written, the seasoned traditional favorite *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*, is an example of a single *text* beckoning composers to write a myriad of *tunes* to accompany it. First penned in 1747 by “the father of Christian Hymnody,” the prolific Charles Wesley, (with some 6000 hymns credited to him, one would guess he *would* be the father!), the original text was first set to the Welsh folk tune, *Moriah* . Later (in 1840) it was attached to the tune *Hyfrodol*, by Rowland H. Prichard. Additional commonly found settings are *Beecher*, by John Zundel, *Airedale*, by Charles V. Stanford , *Blaenwern*, by William P. Rowlands, and *Love Divine*, by John Stainer.

Hyfrydol moves to a meter classified in musical terms as 8.7.8.7 D, i.e. four alternating lines of eight and seven syllables, repeated, or doubled (D). What makes this particular melody so endearing is the ease of its flow, through the simple repetition of its pattern over the eight lines of each verse, and the creating of a natural pulsing drama with lines five and six offering a variation that both bring the poetic phrasing to a crescendo, and set-up the denouement of the final lines seven and eight.

The text’s rhyming pattern reflects the melodic/metric pattern with its AB, AB, CD, CD structure.

Wesley’s lyrics, as found in Wesleyan and most Protestant hymnals (in contrast to Catholic hymnals) unfold a Trinitarian theme. Although the first verse does speak of Jesus and the Incarnation, the lyrics of this and each of the verses flow in terms so “poetic” and ethereal that they nearly contradict the fleshy nature of the Incarnation. The second verse tells us that Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, has the power to give us victory over sin. The third verse speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believer’s life. The concluding stanza points to the future, the day when the elect receive new glorified bodies and are able to cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus. Contemporary theology would hold that the Incarnation means that Earth and Heaven are no longer to be seen as “places” or “worlds” that exist in contestation with each other, but, rather, as realms of existence reconciled by the action of Christ in the world. Jesus had flesh and calls us to use ours to advance the realm of God on Earth., While one

wouldn't know it from the Wesleyan lyrics, given the eschatology and Christology of the 18th and 19th centuries, such an approach to hymn writing would be perfectly understandable and appropriate.

The whole notion of "heaven and earth" is an important one in these Wesleyan lyrics, and in the theological paradigm of the centuries that preceded its composition. The early influence of Romanticism is clear in Wesley with his focus on the mystery, beauty and other-worldly awe of the Divine. Though still in the context of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, 1747, the year of this text's composition, was a far enough off from the American and French revolutions which would shatter the calm and serenity of the mid 18th Century and inject an earthiness and highly secular tone into art and popular thought.

Even within Wesley's own time, there was theological debate over the appropriateness of his second verse referring to the "taking away our bent to sinning." Many theologians of the day, his brother John amongst them, felt it heretical to think of sin as ever being eradicated from the human experience. To this day, most Christian hymnals (except for The Wesleyan Hymnal!) eliminate that verse.

In the light of the Second Vatican Council's understanding of the nature of Church, the call of Baptism and the role of the faithful as partners with Christ in the redemption of the world, such lyrics would be reviewed as uni-dimensional, weighted so in favor of the vertical transcendence of God that the horizontal connection of the faithful to each other and through Christ, to God, is lost.

The intent of the lyrics newly partnered with this outstanding and beloved melody is to speak much more to the communal nature both of relationship in general, and of the liturgy at which such a hymn is sung in particular. I have set four verses, intending dual uses of the song, both as an Gathering Song (using verses 1-3) or as Recessional, using the past tense of the verbs of verses 2-4.

Verse one establishes the reason why we assemble as community to worship, setting the agenda of God's presence at the table where Earth and Heaven are reconciled and the presence of Christ is made real in the community, in the word, and in the Eucharistic bread and wine. Verse two focuses on the Liturgy of the Word where scripture and song call us to mission. Verse three points to the Eucharistic table where the simple gifts we bring become the blessed gifts of God, returned to us for use ourselves and for the healing of the world. Verse four calls us to take the nourishment of the Eucharistic food beyond the bounds of the church and into the hungry, waiting world.

**Love Divine: Tune=Hyfrydol,
Rowland Hugh Prichard, 1830**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1747

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
into ev'ry troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit,
let us find the promised rest;
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Text: Rob Grant, 2006

God of Love, Gift of Compassion

God of love, gift of compassion,
draw us now to share this meal.
Sacred Earth and blessed Heaven
joined as one, your love to heal.
Here you've called us, here we've gathered,
here your presence in word and bread
Open our hearts, our minds and spirits,
so we with your great love are fed.

As we hear your Word broke open,
as we join in song and prayer
May we hear anew your Gospel,
send us forth, this earth to repair.
Here you've called us, here we've gathered,
here we find you, Incarnate Word.
Open our hands in loving service,
so to live what we have heard.

At this table, simple gifts we bring,
symbols of our very lives.
In return, to us you offer
Love's unending sacrifice.
Here remembering, here in sharing,
here with reverence to old and new,
Open our eyes to know your presence,
by your grace in this meal made true.

Take we now the gifts of this table
to the world as living sign.
There to feed, restore and heal the earth,
make real in flesh your love divine.
Here you've called us, here we've gathered,
Here, we've found you, Incarnate Word.
Open our hands in loving service,
so to live what we have heard.

God of Love, Gift of Compassion

Lyrics: Rob Grant

TUNE: Hyfyddol

Legato ♩ = 120

God of love, gift of compassion, draw us now to share this meal.
 As we hear your Word unfolded, as we join in song and prayer.
 At this table, simple gifts we bring, symbols of our very lives.
 Soon to take the work of this table to the world as living signs.

Sacred earth, and blessed heaven joined as one, your grace to heal.
 Help us live a new your Gospel, Send us forth this earth to repair.
 In return to us you offer love's unending sacrifice.
 There to feed, to heal, restore, make real in flesh your love-divine.

Here you've called us, here we've gathered, here, your presence in word and bread,
 Here you've called us, here we've gathered, here we find you incarnate Word.
 Here remembering, here in sharing, here with reverence to old and new.
 Here you've called us, here we've gathered, here we've found you incarnate Word.

Open our hearts our minds - our spirits so we with your great love are fed.
 Open our hands in loving service, so to live what we have heard.
 Open our eyes to know your presence, by your grace in this meal made true.
 Open our hands in loving service, so to live what we have heard.

TEXT: 87 87 D; Copyright © 2007, Rob Grant
 TUNE: HYFRYDDOL: Rowland H. Prichard, 1811-1887

Lambilotte Tune

This tune, named after its composer, Belgian Jesuit Louis Lambilotte, is the vehicle for what would become through the 19th and 20th centuries a signature Catholic hymn to the Holy Spirit, “Come Holy Ghost.”

Pere Lambilotte was an organist and composer whose passion was the reform of Gregorian plainsong. He was among the founders of what is now known as the “Solesmes System,” a school of chant developed at the Abbey of Solesmes, France, committed to presenting and preserving chant in the free-rhythm form in which it was sung in the ninth century, before plainsong came under the influence of measured music.

Given Pere Lambilotte’s passion for 9th century chant, one might ask why he would endeavor to compose a tune in, and be most remembered for, regular 19th century meter. Although there are tomes written *by* him illuminating organ technique and choral training for chant, there is little biographical information written *about* him. One might speculate that his exceptional intimacy with the complexity of free form chant made him decidedly aware of how difficult that style is to be executed effectively by untrained, pew-sitting congregants. Perhaps with his eye and ear to this reality, he chose to compose in the more predictable, parishioner-accessible form of Long Meter, where four lines of 8 syllables each flow in iambic tetrameter, with rhymes in the second and fourth lines. Not at all surprisingly for the chant-impassioned Pere Lambilotte, this meter does allow, because of its long, repeated line length, for the melody to be open to an undulating, symmetric, swelling expanse, organically moving in the fluid nature of chant.

As for the lyrics originally written for the tune, in a skillful turn of creative intention, the lyric’s composer, Latin scholar Edward Caswall, acknowledging the chant-like nature of the Lambilotte tune, crafted for it an English translation of Rhabanus Maurus’, 9th century chant “Veni Creator Spiritus, Mentis Tuorum Visita,” naming it, “Come, Holy Ghost.” In so doing, he gave to congregants around the world (this translation has, in turn, been rendered in many

other languages) one of the first texts of the Holy Spirit intended not just for choirs, but for ordinary people to sing.

Why would a present-day composer want to meddle with such a seminal text? As in the case with Hopkins' Adoro Te Devote/Humbly Lord We Worship, or Pritchard's "Love Divine," it is not to "improve" the spirituality or mystical quality of the piece, nor to simply make it "relevant" to present day ears. Rather it is to acknowledge the evolutionary nature of composition, especially as it manifests in matters as organically unfolding as our understanding of faith and religious expression.

Lambilotte Tune

Text: Edward Caswall, 1860

Come, Holy Ghost

Come Holy Ghost, Creator Blest,
And in our hearts take up Thy rest;
Come with Thy grace and heav'nly aid
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made,
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O Comfort Blest to Thee we cry,
Thou heav'nly Gift of God most high;
Thou fount of life and fire of love,
And sweet anointing from above,
And sweet anointing from above.

Praise be to Thee Father and Son,
And Holy Spirit Three in one;
And may the Son on us bestow
The gifts that from the Spirit flow,
The gifts that from the Spirit flow

Text: Rob Grant, 2007

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator's Gift

Come Holy Spirit, Creator's gift,
Open our minds, our souls uplift.
Help us become what we believe,
|:To share with all what we receive.:|

O heavenly fire, we ask today,
Come warm our hearts, our fears allay.
Give us the courage, to forge with you
God's grand Creation ever new.
God's grand Creation ever new.

O God of grace, Lover of all,
Christ, Love's reflection Christ, Love's call.
Spirit whose pulse fills every breath
Bring us to life, lead us from death
Bring us to life, lead us from death.

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator's Gift

Lyrics--Rob Grant, 2007

Tune--Louis Lambilotte, SJ, 1850
Harmonization, Rob Grant 2007

Molto legato

♩=115

C⁷ F C Am Dm Am E^bMaj⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷

Come Ho-ly Spirit - Cre - a - tor's gift. O - pen our minds, our souls up - lift!
O heavn'ly fire, - we ask to - day: Come warm our hearts, our fears al - lay.
O God of Grace Lov - er of all Christ, Love's re - flec - tion, Christ, Love's call.

9 F^{Maj}⁷ B^bMaj⁷ Gm C Am⁷ F⁷ B^bMaj⁷ Gm⁷ C Am⁷ F F⁷

Teach us to share all we re ceive, so to be - come what we be - lieve.
Give us the courage to forge with you God's blest cre - a - tion e - ver new!
Spi - rit whose pulse fills e - v'ry breath. Bring us to life, lead us from death!

17 F^{Maj}⁷ B^bMaj⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷ F

So to be - come what we be - lieve!
God's blest cre - a - tion e - ver new!
Bring us to life, lead us from death.

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Hymns Based on Traditional Folk Tunes

O Waly Waly, 17th Century Scottish Ballad

The Scottish tune “O Waly Waly” brilliantly represents this category of hymn tunes so markedly in contrast to the chants and ecclesiastically-focused melodies discussed so far. This category, secular tunes adapted for sacred use, illustrate the power of supposedly “profane” music to carry the substance of spiritual text. A tribute to the compelling nature of its melody, it is estimated that as many as 100 folk song lyrics have been set to the “O Waly Waly” tune. There is in the tonal quality an inherently plaintive nature, achieved by the balanced use of major and minor modes within its harmonies—a balance which cleverly makes this melody “work” for both songs of lament and songs of encouragement. So strong is the power of this melody that it has not only stood the test of time, but nearly every genre of music, from classical to jazz, from symphony to soloist has brought it into its repertoire. Among the most noted might be the symphonic treatment of the tune by Benjamin Britten in his London Philharmonic presentation, and the recordings of Sarah Brightman and James Taylor in the world of popular music.

The first appearance of “O Waly Waly” (“O woe and wail”) was in 1670, telling the story of Lady Barbara Erskine, the daughter of the 9th Earl of Mar. She married the 2nd Marquis of Douglas, but was falsely accused of adultery - by a former lover. Believing the false accusation, the Marquis abandoned her, leaving her heartbroken, with only a haunting melody and lamenting words to speak the pain of her soul. From that initial story have sprung many sad tales of devotion misplaced and promises betrayed, among them an American version of love lost, “The Water Is Wide.”

There exist already several examples of ecclesial texts set to this evocative tune. Twentieth century Lutheran composer Ernest Ryden set a tender yet powerful lyric to the tune in his

“How Blessed Is This Place,” a hymn written for the dedication of a church. Brian Wren set the wedding ceremony lyrics “When Love Is Found,” and Dana Harkin added her treatment of Psalm 42, “As the Deer Longs.” I have chosen to compose lyrics for use at a place in liturgy which might be called the quintessential delicate point of lament and encouragement -- the moment at a funeral when the casket is blessed for the last time and the departed is wished farewell in a ritual called the Final Commendation.

**Song of Final Commendation:
Tune= O Waly Waly, 17th Century Scottish Ballad**

*Come to her aid, O saints of God.
Come angels now, her soul embrace.
With arms of welcome, her gently lead
To see her God, now face to face.*

*May Christ who called her, come take her home.
With loving touch, lead her by the hand.
And Abraham, invite her now
To share with him, the Promised Land.*

*Give her O God, eternal rest.
And may she know your unending day.
That she may walk, side by side with You,
There in Your light of love to stay.*

*We know that Christ, our savior lives,
And in our death, with Him we rise.
To join all those who have gone before,
Forever held in God's loving eyes.*

*Come to her aid, O saints of God.
Come angels now, her soul embrace.
With arms of welcome, now lead her on
To see her God, now face to face.*

Song of Reconciliation:

Tune= Domhnach Trionoide--18th Century Gaelic Ballad

Christ Who Calls Us to Compassion

Lyrics: Rob Grant
Legato

TUNE: Domhnach Trionoide

1. Christ, who calls us to com - pas - sion_ to the pain be - yond our own_

2. As we lis - ten to your Word, Lord, let our minds be a fer - tile place_

3. As we ga - ther here to - ge - ther_ wrong'd and wound - ed, gift - ed blest_

1. Here we pray for un - der - stand - ing and con - fess our hearts of stone.

2. For the seeds of true com - pas - sion, and the plant - ing of your grace

3. We re - mem - ber your for - give - ness and the chal - lenge of your test,

1. Help us sof - ten what we've hard - end, what we cling to_ out of pride_

2. If we lis - ten with - out chang - ing, then our list' - ning's all in vain_

3. If we seek not to be judged, with - out judg - ing let us

1. So we hear with ears at - ten - tive, see with new eyes o - pen wide_

2. For your Word calls us to heal_ and to ease each o - ther's pain_

3. As we hold so shall we be_ held as we loose, we shall be free_

1. 2. 3. *Fine*

TUNE: Domhnach Trionoide
TEXT: Rob Grant, © 2006. All rights reserved

be

Pleading Savior--1831

This tune, first set to the lyrics “Now the Savior Stands a’Pleading,” in 1831 by Elder John Leland and published by Joshua Levitt in *The Christian Lyre*, is another illustration of this class of hymn tunes long associated with sacred worship and set with a variety of church-oriented texts, but which actually “began” as simple folk tunes with far from “sacred” lyrics. Derived from the Cornish tune known as Saltash (the town in Cornwall in which the tune is believed to have first been popular), like many of the tunes from the Welsh and Gaelic tradition, it is based on the pentatonic scale, the 5-tone pattern of music indigenous to many cultures, from the Celtic peoples of the North Atlantic to the ancient Mongols (and present day Chinese), to the island dwellers of Bali and Java, and the jungle tribes of Tanzania.

Employing a commonly used meter which allows a repeated pattern of an eight-syllabled line followed by a seven-syllabled line, the 8-7-8-7 sequence allows for a very natural flow of words and a comfortable rhyming scheme (AB-AB, CD-CD). Levitt’s text (a full seven verses of it) paints the picture of a Jesus standing in Heaven, pleading for sinners to come to their senses, mend their wicked ways and accept his love.

1-Now the Savior stands a pleading; At the sinner's bolted heart;
Now in heaven he's interceding, Undertaking sinners' part.
Sinners, can you hate this Savior? Will you thrust him from your arms?
Once he died for your behavior, Now he calls you to his arms.

2-Now he pleads his sweat and blood-shed, Shows his wounded hands and feet;
Father, save them, though they're blood red, Raise them to a heavenly seat.
Sinners, can you hate this Savior? Will you thrust him from your arms?
Once he died for your behavior, Now he calls you to his arms.

3- Sinners, hear your God and Savior, Hear his gracious voice to-day;
Turn from all your vain behavior, O repent, return, and pray.
Sinners, can you hate this Savior? Will you thrust him from your arms?
Once he died for your behavior, Now he calls you to his arms.

4-O be wise before you languish On the bed of dying strife ;
Endless joy, or dreadful anguish, Turn upon the events of life.
Sinners, can you hate this Savior? Will you thrust him from your arms?
Once he died for your behavior, Now he calls you to his arms.

5- Now he's waiting to be gracious,
Now he stands and looks on thee,
See, what kindness, love and pity,
Shine around on you and me.
Sinners, can you hate...

6- Open now your hearts before him,
Bid the Savior welcome in ^
Now receive,—and O adore him,
Take a full discharge from sin.
Sinners, can you hate...

7- Come, for all things now are ready,
Yet there's room for many more ,•
O ye blind, ye lame and needy,
Come to wisdom's boundless store.
Sinners, can you hate...

The easy-going flow of the meter and rhyming pattern well fit the sweet and gentle sentimentality of Leland's "Come to Jesus" lyrics, and the melodic pattern of A-A-B-A make it an easily accessed and remembered tune.

The most common Catholic hymn text associated with this melody is "Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly," composed by Roland Palmer in 1938. Like the original lyrics from Leland's composition nearly 100 years earlier, Palmer's text paints a simple religious picture. Verse one speaks of Mary as Virgin, Mother of God; verse two, of Jesus and Mary, (quickly moving in a mere four lines) from Nazareth to Calvary; and verse three concludes with a Trinitarian doxology.

My interest in re-setting the Palmer lyrics stems from a larger concern about the place of women in the Roman Catholic church in general, and in liturgical experience in particular. Although, as reported in *Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling* (Barbara Brown Zikmund,) nearly 80% of church workers, and nearly 50% of seminarians, are women, in the Catholic Church, NONE of these women will be allowed to be ordained, and, even in the Protestant domain, only 20% of ordained clergy are female. What does this have to do with song lyrics? I contend that it has *much* to do with it.

The way we speak of women in either sacred or secular music not only *reflects* the current attitude toward women, but, most dangerously, it can *entrench* attitudes in the church and in society which not only deny the God-given full dignity due every human being, but actually present empirically inaccurate and historically false images of an entire 50% of the species.

Palmer's portrayal of Mary as "pure and lowly—virgin mother undefiled" reflects not only a Mariology of the time, but, composed in 1938, a mere 18 years after the 19th Amendment granted women's suffrage in the US, (an amendment vigorously decried by many Catholic prelates), a social prescription about the worth and identity of women.

Palmer's picture of Mary is one dimensional, relying only on precise scriptural references for information about who Mary was. And who is the Mary Palmer draws? Is Mary the exceptionally aware and extraordinarily empowered teen-aged girl who discerns in herself a calling from God to accomplish an enormously challenging task? Is she the young woman who, discovering she is unmarried and pregnant, eschewing the insulting categorizations of being "defiled" or "undefiled," simply sees in this pregnancy the Will of God? Is she the first teacher of the boy Jesus, his constant comrade as he walks his dangerous road to Jerusalem, and the last companion by his side at Calvary? Is she the brilliant example of a life lived brazenly and offered to us as challenge to imitate that courage and conviction?

No. Palmer's Mary is pure and mild. Certainly not the Mary to be seen through even the most modest inference of scripture, and certainly not fleshed-out enough to be the Mary to be proposed to any teen, or any grown up, as a concrete example of a disciple of Christ.. This distinction between time-honored older lyrics and these newer settings is made not to discredit the traditional writers, or to discount the value of the earlier texts and their impact on the faith lives of hymnal users throughout the years. Rather, the intent is to reinforce the evolutionary nature of composition, especially as it manifests in matters as organically unfolding as our understanding of faith.

The purpose of any liturgical element , be it scripture, prayer, gesture, movement, vestment, vessel, ritual, or song is to move us from the place of "So, there it is..." to the place of "So, what do we do now?" Catholics need Marian hymns that give us a genuine "So, what's our task now? We know of Mary's faith, her courage, her fortitude, her compassion...what are WE going to do about it? How will our lives bring to the world the enfleshment of Christ and the building of the Kingdom in the brazen way that her's did?"

For Christians, any "religious" experience is only as good as the action which follows in the transformation of the habits and conditions of our lives, and of the world, that are not of Christ.

Pleading Savior: 19th Century Cornish Folk Tune

Text: Roland Palmer, 1938

Sing of Mary ,Pure and Lowly

Sing of Mary, pure and lowly,
virgin mother undefiled
Sing of God's own Son most Holy
who became her little child.
Fairest child of fairest mother,
God the Lord who came to earth.
Word made flesh our very brother,
takes our nature by his birth

Sing of Jesus, Son of Mary,
in their home at Nazareth.
Toil and labor can not wear,
love enduring unto death.
Constant was the love he gave her,
though he went forth from her side.
Forth to preach and heal and suffer,
Til on Calvary he died.

Glory be the God the Father,
Glory be the God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit,
Glory to the Three in One.
From the heart of blessed Mary,
from all saints the song ascends.
And the Church the song re-echoes,
to the earth's remotest ends

Text: Rob Grant, 2006

Sing We of Mary Strong and Bold

Sing we of Mary, strong and bold.
She whom prophets did foresee
She who would make God's plan unfold.
She whose "yes" changed history.
Mary, with joy, we sing now your glory,
Knowing your challenge to us here on earth:
Bring the Divine to the human story,
Bring to the world its second birth.

Sing we of Mary, first believer
First disciple, first to teach.
First as giver, then receiver
First to learn, to live, to preach.
Woman, sister, wife and mother,
First of disciples, last at the cross.
Teach us walk with Christ, our brother:
Teach us to love without counting cost.

Sing we of Mary, ever present,
Ever a part in the human scene
Ever as earth's most noble peasant
Ever as Heaven's humble queen.
Mary the dawn to Christ's loving day-
Mary the star to Christ's radiant sun!
Open our hearts, our minds, we pray!
Open our hands to the work to be done.

Sing We of Mary

Lyrics: Rob Grant

TUNE: PLEADING SAVIOR

Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C Am⁷ B^bma⁷/C Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C B^b B^b/C F

Sing we of Ma - ry strong and bold she whom pro - phets did fore - see.
 Sing we of Ma - ry first be - liev - er, first di - sci - ple first to teach.
 Sing we of Ma - ry e - ver pre - sent e - ver a part of the hu - man scene.

6 Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C Am⁷ B^bma⁷/C Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C B^b B^b/C F

She who would make God's Plan un - fold She whose "Yes" made his - to - ry.
 First as gi - ver then, re - ceiv - er. First to learn, to live, to preach.
 E - ver Earth's most no - ble pea - sant, e - ver Hea - ven's hum - ble Queen.

10 Am⁷ Dm⁷ B^bma⁷/C Am⁹ Fma⁷ Am⁷ B^b B^b/C C

Ma - ry with joy we sing now your glo - ry. Know - ing your chal - lenge to us here on earth.
 Wo - man sis - ter, wife and mo - ther, First of di - sci - ples, last at the cross.
 Ma - ry, the Dawn, to Christ's lov - ing day, Ma - ry, the Star to Christ's di - ant Sun!

14 Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C Am⁷ B^bma⁷/C Fma⁷ B^bma⁷/C B^b B^b/C F

Bring the Di - vine to the hu - man sto - ry, Bring to the World its se - cond birth.
 Teach us to walk with Christ, our bro - ther. Teach us to love with - out count - ing cost.
 O - pen our hearts, our minds, we pray O - pen our hands to the work to be done.

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Land of Rest—Appalachian Folk Tune

Like many tunes originating from America's first colonial settlements, this tune from the hills of West Virginia is of 16th century British origin. It first appeared in hymn form in the 1832 edition of the hymnal called *The Christian Harp* under the title "O Land of Rest."

Many contemporary texts have been set to this hexatonic (six-tone) melody, among them Fred Kaan's "God, When I Came Into This Life" and Ruth Duck's "In Solitude," but the signature text for this tune is the classic funeral hymn, "Jerusalem, My Happy Home" whose 16th century author is known only as F.B.P.

True to the "land of rest" original theme, and the "happy home" re-composition, this new 2007 text endeavors to take best advantage of the simple Common Meter and flowing melodic line which provide a feeling of calm and comfort in the moments and days of death and mourning.

Where the original texts describe the delights of Heaven as deriving primarily from the end of earthly sorrow and the joining of the departed with the celestial company, the new text draws Heaven as the "place" where there is indeed great company, but, in contrast, where the joy is much more complex, and explicit than the simple lack of sorrow. In the older texts, joy seems to be restored with sorrow's disappearance and a vague entrance into "bliss." In the new text, it is not "the end of sorrow" which brings delight, but, painted more positively, it is the achievement of the soul's ultimate desire which brings delight and a sense of being home. And, most importantly, this desire is not for a mere (and vaguely undefined) "end to sorrow," but, rather an end to the anger, resentment, shame, fear, un-forgiveness dis-ease and un-compassion that are the origins of the sorrow we experience on this earth. This distinction between time-honored older lyrics and these newer settings is made not to discredit the traditional writers, or to discount the value of the earlier texts and their impact on the faith lives of hymnal users throughout the years. Rather, the intent is to reinforce the evolutionary nature of composition, especially as it manifests in matters as organically unfolding as our understanding of faith.

Land of Rest—Appalachian Folk Tune

Text: Roland Palmer, 1938

Jerusalem, My Happy Home

Jerusalem, my happy home, When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbor of the saints, O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found, No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

There trees forevermore bear fruit And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit And evermore do sing.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, God grant that I may see
Thine endless joy, and of the same partaker I may be!

Jerusalem, my happy home, When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see?

Text: Rob Grant, 2007

Jerusalem, My Heart's True Home

Jerusalem, my heart's true home, My joyful destiny!
Where shall be found soul's desire In Blessed Company.

O happy harbor saints have sought, And weary have found rest.
Where hands, once clenched, are opened wide,
Words, once unspoken, expressed.

Your gardens, lush, your pastures, verdant, Your air so fresh and clean!
Your waters sparkling, your pathways, wide, Your forests, deep and green.

Place of our birth, and Promised Land Where enemies embrace.
Where all will know God's healing touch And see Compassion's face.

Jerusalem, my final home, where all unfolds in peace!
Where all from shame shall find deliverance And from all fear, release.

Jerusalem, my heart's true home, My joyful destiny!
Where shall be found soul's desire In Blessed Company.

Jerusalem, My Heart's True Home

Lyrics: Rob Grant

LAND OF REST-American Adaptation of 16th Century English Tune
Harmonization by Rob Grant

♩=130 FMaj7 B♭Maj7 FMaj7

Piano

3 B♭Maj7 F Gm7 B♭Maj7 Am7

6 B♭Maj7 Gm7 Am7 C7 B♭Maj7 Am7

9 Gm Am7 Gm7 C7sus F

Pno.

Je - ru - sa - lem, my heart's true home, my
Oh hap - py har - bor of the saints and
Your gar - dens lush, your pas - tures ver - dant, your
Land of our birth, and Pro - mised Land, where
Je - ru - sa - lem, my fi - nal home, where

joy - ful des - ti - ny! Where shall be found my
for the wea - ry rest Where hands, once clenched, are
air so fresh and clean! Your wa - ters spark - ling your
en - e - mies em - brace? Where we will know God's
all un - folds in Peace! Where all from shame shall

soul's de - sire in Bless - ed com - pa - ny.
o - pened wide, words, once un - spo - ken ex - pressed.
path - ways wide, your for - ests deep and green.
heal - ing touch and see Com - pass - ion's face.
find de - livr' ance, from all fear, re - lease.

Pno.

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Hymns based on “New Classical” Tunes inspired by Folk Idioms

“Goin’ Home,” from Dvořák’s New World Symphony

This final category of tunes upon which hymns have been built is that of melodies which, though originally composed for symphonic purposes, have subsequently been inculcated into popular culture as idiomatic folk tunes. The tune which later became known as “Goin Home” is adapted from the melodic leitmotif of the second movement, the Largo, from Czech composer Antonín Dvořák’s Symphony No. 9, in E Minor “From the New World,” popularly known as the “New World Symphony,” written in 1893 during the composer’s three-year visit to the United States.

Dvořák was one of several composers of the Romantic era (1820-1900) who allowed his cultural roots to shine through his music. Although the structure of his music follows along general classical lines, his rhythms and melodies frequently embodied the folk traditions of his native Czechoslovakia, a sound-and-rhythm-catching penchant and skill which would translate to be the trademark of his compositions in America as well. When Dvorak came to the U.S., he was so taken with the spirit of the new country that he wrote his Ninth Symphony as both impression of, and tribute to, this “New World.” While his music was completely original, his symphonic themes, inspired by his admiration of the pentatonic scales employed by both the African American and the Native American cultures, are frequently (though erroneously) believed to be old American folk tunes.

Years after the symphony was composed, one of Dvořák’s composition students, William Arms Fisher, while playing the Largo movement, found himself mesmerized by the power of its opening cadences, and began jotting down the simple lyrics, “goin’ home—goin’ home, I’m jes ‘goin’ home. . . .,” the first of many songs which have taken this powerful melody as the vehicle for lyrics offering solace in times of loss and farewell. And for this project, this hauntingly evocative theme becomes the motif for a new tonal and rhythmic approach to the Catholic Liturgy’s Sequence for feast of Pentecost.

Text: Willaim Arms Fisher, 1938

Goin' Home

Going home, going home, I'm just going home.
Quiet-like, slip away- I'll be going home.
It's not far, just close by; Jesus is the Door;
Work all done, laid aside, Fear and grief no more.
Friends are there, waiting now. He is waiting, too.
See His smile! See His hand! He will lead me through

No more guilt, no more fear, all the past is healed;
Broken dreams now restored, perfect grace revealed.
Christ has died, Christ is ris'n, Christ will come again;
Death destroyed, live restored, love alone shall reign.
Going home, moving on, through God's open door;
Hush, my soul, have no fear, Christ has gone before.

Going home, moving on, through God's open door;
Hush, my soul, have no fear, Christ has gone before.
Parting hurts, love protests, pain is not denied;
Yet in Christ, life and hope span the great divide.
Going home, moving on, though God's open door;
Hush, my soul, have no fear, Christ has gone before.

Morning Star lights the way; Restless dream all done;
Shadows gone, break of day, Life has just begun.
Every tear wiped away, Pain and sickness gone;
Wide awake there with Him! Peace goes on and on!
Going home, going home, I'll be going home.
See the Light! See the Sun! I'm just going home.

Text: Rob Grant, 2007

Sequence for Pentecost— Come, O Holy Spirit

Come, O Holy Spirit, come! And from your celestial home
Shed a ray of light divine! Come, O Spirit, come!
Come now, Father of the poor! In our bosoms shine
Come, you source of all our store ! All our fears, refine.

You, of comforters the best; You, the soul's most welcome guest;
Sweet refreshment here below; Come, O Spirit, come!
In our labor, rest most sweet; Solace in our pain
Grateful coolness in the heat, Soothe our world again.

O most blessed Light divine Shine within these hearts of thine.
And our inmost being fill! Come, O Spirit, come!
Where you are not, man has naught, Nothing free from ill.
Nothing good in deed or thought, Nothing of your will.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew; On our dryness pour Thy dew;
Wash the stains of guilt away: Come, O Spirit, come!
Bend the stubborn heart and will; Melt the frozen, soul!
Guide the steps that go astray. make the wounded whole!

On the faithful who adore And confess you, evermore
In your sev'nfold gift descend; Come, O Spirit, come!
Give them virtue's sure reward; Salvation in your home
Give them joy that never ends. Come, O Spirit, come!!

Conclusion

For liturgical musicians to perform our ministry with the highest integrity and the utmost efficacy, we must be aware and respectful of not only of our *traditions*, but of our *trajectory* as a dynamically evolving people. We must acknowledge that our expertise is not merely a matter of musical and liturgical proficiency. Rather, our effectiveness as ministers will be in proportion to our own personal depth of faith, and our understanding and living of the reality that we are nurturers of the community, setting a table for communities that gather at our tables each week.

As writers and tellers of the community's stories, we must be conscious that, whether we ever step into a classroom or not, we are, by the way we shape a music program, the choices we make in repertoire and the spirit in which we present the music, in the ministry of faith formation. We need to recognize (and accept the responsibility that comes with these roles) that we are more than accomplished musicians. In the most real of ways we are catechists, evangelizers, hermeneuts, moral guides, teachers of ethics, presenters of theological paradigms, prophets of social justice, preservers of history, and organizers of the community.

We are feeders. And, we are leaders.

The big question is: to where and what are we leading our communities? To feeling good? To aesthetic delight? To our own celebrity? To theirs? To the safety and comfort of tradition? To mere piety? To easy faith? To middling hope? To undemanding love? If we are not leading our communities to the Gospel, with its challenges, its comforts, its stability, its messiness, its joy, its sorrows, its demands, its delights, we are leading them down the wrong path. If we view and present liturgy as a noun, a thing, where actions happen to us and others, and not as a verb, an event requiring our response and transformation in the world, then we have failed. My prayer is that I may live up to these standards of ministry, and that this project may help others do the same.

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