



# Prairie Praise

A newsletter from the  
Office of Worship  
Diocese of New Ulm  
Fall 2009

Greetings to all who assist with parish liturgy! I hope this fall newsletter finds you well. Enjoy this issue of *Prairie Praise* that includes information on praise and worship music, an update on the Roman Missal and several events that will be offered through the diocese.

## Praise and Worship Music: Inappropriate or sensible approach?

One question that arises often with musicians is the use of so-called “praise and worship” music for the liturgy. The name itself is a bit thorny because, after all, aren’t all of the songs we sing for the liturgy in praise and worship of our almighty God? Some have questioned this music because of the persistent reference on the individual rather than the communal aspect of faith. Some are uneasy with using the instrumentation that is needed to perform these songs well. Others fear that we are just giving in to the youth of our parishes who want to be entertained which misses the concept that liturgical prayer should be inspiring and directed toward Christ, but not necessarily entertaining and directed toward oneself.

One of the best places to gain some perspective on this is from the National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM). They have published numerous articles on the topic in their journal. One can even download these articles at [http://www.npm.org/pastoral\\_music/archives.html](http://www.npm.org/pastoral_music/archives.html) From what has been written by liturgical scholars, pastoral musicians and composers, we must always revert back to the three-fold judgments found in *Music in Catholic Worship* and reiterated in *Sing to the Lord* as the musical, liturgical and pastoral criteria for sound liturgical music. To illustrate, let’s review a contemporary piece *Awesome God* by Rich Mullins.

*Musically*, it has good rhythm which would appeal to a lot of people (Let’s not assume that older parishioners don’t like upbeat songs and that the youth only are pulled toward contemporary songs). The verses would be too much for any assembly to muster since it was written as a “call and response” piece, needing a trained vocalist to be on top of it so the assembly is sure of when to come in. Forget about using the organ for this, or piano alone. It begs for well trained lead, acoustic and bass guitars as well as keyboard and drums. To try to pull off a piece that is written originally for a contemporary ensemble that your parish doesn’t have would be a recipe for disaster.

*Liturgically*, the text seems to say a lot about the greatness of God. Creation, sin and mercy, and the restoration of grace through the cross are emphasized. It could be appropriate for the Lenten or Easter seasons. It would work well for an opening or closing song because of the text and the length. But on the other hand, the text could present a difficulty that should be considered. It doesn’t distinguish the God of creation from the person of Christ. In its attempt to show God as

the author of all, it neglects to tell how Christ participated in the act of salvation. It fails to show good Trinitarian theology and suggests that it was God, not the person of Jesus, who died on the cross. Most people wouldn't give the text a second thought. So it is up to music planners to take the time to assess each musical piece that is used in the liturgy, to be sure the songs are free from heresy or misguided theology.

*Pastorally*, this is a song that is well known to the Christian music scene and is done quite often for youth rallies. But does the song capture the essence of the liturgical season or occasion that is being celebrated? Does the song lead the assembly toward the sacred mysteries of the Mass? Does it express the faith of those gathered? The answer to these questions will vary from parish to parish. What may work well for one group of individuals may not work so well for another.

We can use the same criteria to consider the use of the song *Blessed By Your Sacrifice*, a traditional hymn found in most Catholic hymnals. *Musically*, it is written in a familiar hymn style. However, the style of the piece is not what drives the musical judgment. Rather, is it a song that will endure from generation to generation? It is very easy to sing and to learn. However, some songs that are easy to sing are not necessarily appropriate for liturgy. For instance, *Happy Birthday* and *Mary Had a Little Lamb* are easy to sing but certainly don't move our minds toward the divine, nor do they praise God. Music in the hymn style tends to feel overused and worn-out for an assembly. This particular piece can be done with an adapted organ harmonization, could be done on the piano in a contemporary style, and instruments could be added for extra flair to facilitate a new sound to an old favorite.

*Liturgically*, it makes for a good opening song that speaks of the sacrifice that is worthy of our praise. Its lack of a refrain and the textual emphasis on adoration make this song less desirable for communion, when the ritual action is all about receiving our Lord. It is also too short for use at communion, when the song should cover the ritual action beginning when the priest partakes. It does not hint at any particular liturgical season, which would make this a good choice for Ordinary Time.

*Pastorally*, it may or may not work well for the season being celebrated. It would need to be determined whether the song speaks to the faith of those who are gathered. Culture is another question to consider under the pastoral criteria and answers will vary from parish to parish and from assembly to assembly.

Many factors need to be considered in choosing the right songs for liturgical worship. The songs *Awesome God* and *Blessed By Your Sacrifice* differ greatly in style and text but both would be considered appropriate for some occasions and inappropriate at other times. Words are important, but so is the way a particular piece moves us and speaks to us. The bishops remind us that "the role of music is to serve the needs of the Liturgy and not to dominate it, seek to entertain, or draw attention to itself or the musicians...The primary role of music in the Liturgy is to help the members of the gathered assembly to join themselves with the action of Christ and to give voice to the gift of faith" (*Sing to the Lord*, no.125). What is appropriate then, is not determined by style, but by how well the musical, liturgical, and pastoral dimensions of a particular song are met for this assembly, at this particular time, and in this gathered assembly.



## Update on the Roman Missal

The Diocese of New Ulm has begun to take extensive steps to catechize Catholics about the upcoming completion of the translation of the Roman Missal. While the date of implementation remains uncertain, we do know that now is the time to become familiar with the new texts and to consider how this will affect our worship. To facilitate this task, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops Committee on Divine Worship has launched a revised website on the Roman Missal. There you can find the new translation of the Mass texts, including *Eucharistic Prayers* and the *Ordinary* (the prayers and responses that are done at every Mass). To access this, you may go to <http://www.usccb.org/romanmissal> For those who do not have access to the internet, you may contact the Office of Worship if you wish to view the new texts.

Keep an eye out for monthly articles in the *Prairie Catholic* regarding the Roman Missal as well as your parish bulletin. The Diocese has provided all parishes with short catechetical announcements that compliment the Sunday readings and describe some aspect of the new translation. These are available on the diocesan website at <http://dnu.org/worship/qa-bulletins.pdf>

## Announcements

***Pueri Cantores***, the national choral student organization of the Catholic Church, invites all parish and school youth choirs to participate in a Festival and Mass for singers ages 9-18, on Sunday, November 22, 2009 at the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas, Saint Paul, MN. Parishes may wish to send individual singers or youth choirs. The event includes rehearsals, a choral festival, and a concluding Mass. Contact Ann Przybilla for more info.

### ***Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship***

Order from the Office of Worship to receive a 30% discount *off the \$9.95 regular price!* Ordering is as easy as contacting the Office of Worship at 507-359-2966 or emailing Kathy Huebert at [khuebert@dnu.org](mailto:khuebert@dnu.org). Specify how many copies you wish to receive and for which parish you are ordering for. This is the guiding document for music in the United States parishes, replacing *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today*.

***The Name of God in Worship:*** By directive of the Holy Father, the *Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments* has issued guidelines on the use of the Divine Name of God in worship. In songs and prayers of the liturgy the name of God in the form of the word *Yahweh* is not to be used. This is to maintain the original integrity in translating scripture and to remain faithful to the Christian tradition that *Yahweh* was never pronounced in naming God. You may read the directive to get a fuller understanding at <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/NameOfGod.pdf>

***LTP Items:*** Remember to order all Liturgical Training Publications (LTP) resources from the Diocesan Office of Worship to receive a 30% discount on most items!

# Enrichment Opportunities

*Below are some of the 2009-2010 opportunities for those involved with parish liturgy offered by the Diocese of New Ulm. Mark your calendars now and invite others to take part. Contact the Office of Worship for more information regarding registration.*

## **Environment for the Seasons**

Participants will learn ways to enhance the church for all of the liturgical seasons of the Church year. Guest Presenter: *Sr. Joyce Ann Zimmerman*

**Saturday, October 24, 2009 – 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Church of St. Aloysius, Olivia**

## **Holy Communion and Adoration**

The fruits of the practice of Adoration will be shared as well as ideas on how to structure communal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. An explanation of the correlation between the Mass and Adoration will be given. This gathering is ideal for parishioners and parish leaders responsible for carrying out Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in their parish.

**Tuesday, February 23, 2010 - 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Church of St. Mary, Willmar**

## **North American Forum on the Catechumate**

*Institute on Concerning the Baptized* While more information will come next spring, please mark your calendars now to save the date of **August 6-7, 2010**. This is a workshop that is not typically offered in our Diocese so we want as many people as possible to take advantage of it. We have requested speakers that are the experts in the rural initiation experience. It is designed for:

- Clergy who want to learn more about the RCIA documents and to learn about celebrating the rites with meaning, grace and sincerity.
- RCIA team leaders and catechists who could benefit from a refresher course on the rituals and other elements of initiating the already baptized.
- Newcomers to your RCIA team who need to learn more.
- Youth Ministers, DRE's, liturgy coordinators and other lay ministers who wish to expand their level of knowledge regarding the initiation of the baptized.

**Life in the Spirit Seminars** are being offered through the Diocesan Charismatic Renewal Committee. The seminar focuses on reawakening the gifts of the Holy Spirit received at Baptism and Confirmation. For more information or to request this one day seminar in your parish, contact Bonnie Rademacher at 320-235-8655.

