

This week, we discuss some of the principles that guide our decisions when choosing to sing parts of Mass.

The **Three Judgments** (Musical, Liturgical, and Pastoral) govern choices for all the music sung during Mass:

- Songs for processions: Entrance, Presentation of Gifts, Communion, and Dismissal
- Acclamations: Kyrie Eleison, Glory to God, Gospel Acclamation, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen, and Lamb of God.
- Presider's prayers: Collect, Prayer over the Gifts, Preface, Eucharistic Prayer, Prayer after Communion
- Dialogues: The Lord be with you / And with your spirit. The Word of the Lord / Thanks be to God. Etc.

The *Musical Judgment* considers the art of the piece of music in question: is it good music? Is it worthy for Sunday worship? The *Liturgical Judgment* considers whether this music fits the liturgical action or season, and whether it reflects the scripture readings and the texts of the Roman Missal. The *Pastoral Judgment* asks whether this music expresses the prayer of this parish.

The principle of **Progressive Solemnity** suggests that those elements which are more important should be given more attention, while less important elements should recede. When we're talking about the liturgical art of music, one way to give more attention to a liturgical text or action is to sing.

For instance, the high point of the Liturgy of the Eucharist is the Eucharistic Prayer. The Church instructs us that if anything is sung, the dialogues between priest and people and the Eucharistic Acclamations such as the Holy, Holy, Memorial and Great Amen would be sung. During the Liturgy of the Word, the proclamation of the Gospel, and therefore the Gospel Acclamation which precedes it, is the high point; in fact, the singing of the Alleluia is so important that if the Alleluia is not sung, it should be omitted.

This is a situation unlikely to arise at Saint Hubert on a Sunday. But imagine a parish with limited resources deciding: "We're pretty good singers, so some Sunday when we don't have a pianist or a cantor, we'll just sing the Entrance Song and then a song at the end. We'll recite everything else." It would be better for that imaginary parish, guided by the Principle of Progressive Solemnity, to choose to sing only the Gospel and Eucharistic Acclamations. In most U.S. churches, this was probably an issue within the first 10 or 20 years following the Second Vatican Council, but has since been settled.

At Saint Hubert, a more likely scenario of Progressive Solemnity would be whether we would sing or recite the Penitential Act. It has been our custom during the season of Lent to sing the Penitential Act but during other seasons of the year to recite it.

The Church also has something to say about style of music or which instruments are permitted or forbidden. With regard to style, all styles are permitted, and Gregorian chant is to be preserved. Over the years, Saint Hubert has periodically included these ancient chants in our repertoire so that we may sing them confidently and so that each new generation can learn them. With regard to instruments, no instrument is forbidden, and therefore, any instrument is permitted.

Next week, we'll look at one more guiding principle: Sometimes music accompanies the ritual action. Sometimes music *is* the ritual action.