

## MUSIC AND SINGING AT MASS

Sunday October 30, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The changes that the translation of the Roman Missal will introduce on Sunday November 27, 2011 are about more than externals. The changes are introduced to help us deepen our prayer life and energize our commitment as Catholics in the community. Music and singing at Mass is another example in the new Missal that aims at deepening our prayer life and commitment to love and serve God and neighbour.

Because of the revised translation of the Roman Missal (from Latin) the new words and phrases have necessitated new music, for example for the Gloria, the Holy HolyHoly and the Acclamation of faith.

I wish to express my gratitude to the choirs, musicians, cantors and directors of music who have been working diligently to practice the new settings for Mass. I invite parishioners and priests in every Church to express their gratitude to their respective choirs, cantors and directors. Along with your gratitude, no doubt the best affirmation you can offer your parish music ministers is by singing heartily and joyfully when they invite your participation at Mass.

In Canada three music settings for the Eucharist have been approved. I have asked that the music ministers in every parish learn at least one setting for the time being. ***Celebrate in Song*** is the approved hymnal in Canada containing the three music settings as well as the people's parts, new hymns and the Eucharistic Prayers.

Music conveys reverence, prayerfulness, joy, grief, hope, and the longing of the heart in a way that words alone cannot. One experiences the mood of the Liturgy on Good Friday differently from Easter Sunday in large part because of the music. One prays from the heart differently at Midnight Mass on Christmas than one does on Ash Wednesday. We experience that shift in mood and prayerful disposition, not just by the words we say, but by the melody that enters our souls.

The General Instruction on the Roman Missal identifies the Assembly of the Faithful as the primary subject of liturgical music; that is to say, the prime responsibility for song belongs to the people in the Assembly. There are specific roles in music for the ordained, the choir and the cantor (GIRM #40 and #103).

If you have a good voice, sing with all your heart to thank God for the gift of your voice; if you can't carry a tune, sing anyway. Let the Lord know that you're doing your best with what God gave you! Remember, we are not performing for others; we are worshiping God with songs and hymns.

The General Instruction on the Roman Missal **reminds music ministers and priests that songs or hymns may not be used in place of Responsorial Psalm** (GIRM #61). Parishes throughout the Diocese are to follow this directive.

Finally, #39 of the General Instruction on the Roman Missal reads:

*"The Christian Faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord's coming are instructed by the apostle Paul to sing together Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Canticles (cf. col. 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (Acts 2:46) thus St. Augustine says rightly, "singing is for one who loves" and there is an ancient proverb, "whoever sings, prays twice). I exhort everyone, priests, liturgical ministers and laity to participate together in the revisions of the Sunday Mass beginning 27 November 2011.*

*Sincerely yours in Christ,  
+Bishop Richard Grecco,  
Diocese of Charlottetown*