



VER the significant date line of "the feast of St. Pius X, September 3, 1958" the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (nos. 12-13, pp. 630-663) published an "Instruction" on church music and the liturgy in the light of the two encyclicals of Pope Pius XII, *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (December 25, 1955) and *Mediator Dei* (November 20, 1947). In the opening paragraph of the Instruction attention is called, moreover, to the Motu proprio of Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini* (November 22, 1903) which constituted the official beginning of our modern reform of Church music and the liturgy, and to Pius XI's apostolic constitution *Divini cultus* (December 20, 1928) which was issued on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Motu proprio.

It is chiefly in these papal documents that the substance is contained from which the Instruction has drawn its directives. This obviously means that the Instruction is, on principle, not concerned with establishing *new legislation*, but merely with applying in practice, from the "musical-pastoral-liturgical" standpoint, the laws that already exist. The term "pastoral" must be understood in its broader sense: included are "training" in the liturgy and in liturgical music.

SCOPE OF THE INSTRUCTION

The Instruction, in other words, does not contain any revolutionizing prescriptions. It rests entirely upon the foundation of the rubrics, decrees and legislation currently in force. It aims to show how both church music and the liturgy can and should be celebrated and promoted within the existing liturgical and musical framework of the Roman liturgy.

In regard to the Latin language of the Church, especially, it is imperative to keep in mind what Pope Pius XII stated on several occasions, but with particular clarity and forcefulness in his address to the participants in the great international liturgical congress of Assisi: "It would be superfluous to recall once again that the Church has serious reasons for retaining steadfastly in the Latin Rite the unconditional obligation of the priest celebrant to use the Latin language, and, likewise, for insisting that the Gregorian chant at the holy Sacrifice be in the language of the Church" (*AAS* 48 (1956) 724). It is known that the views of the now deceased Pontiff in this

matter became more rigid in the course of the years rather than milder.

For this reason, nobody should be surprised that the Instruction, which was composed at the command of the Pope, exactly and carefully stays within the bounds set down by him. For that matter, the general discipline concerning liturgical language can be changed in basic fashion only by a solemn pronouncement of the supreme head of the Church — certainly not by a mere Instruction!

In order therefore to evaluate the present Instruction justly and rightly, it is indispensable that it be viewed *from the standpoint of the Apostolic See*, which alone has the competence to regulate the liturgy of the Church. This unique competence has in recent times been so often insisted upon (e.g., also in *Mediator Dei*) that there can be no excuse for ignoring it.

It is pertinent to inquire, therefore, whether the many and often very different ways of celebrating “community Masses” have not perhaps, despite the best of intentions, at times gone beyond what the general existing legislation would allow. If then the Instruction corrects such unlawful forms of Mass-celebration, no one surely has cause to complain. On the other hand, the Instruction is equally as time-conditioned and time-bound as all other human laws and directives; it is not impossible therefore that, when the proper moment arrives, it will again be brought up-to-date. Nor should it be overlooked that very many of the directions are not “preceptive,” but only recommended, or declared desirable.

Undoubtedly another reason which made the publication of an Instruction of this kind almost a necessity was the fact that in recent years an ever greater number of official “Mass Directories” have made their appearance. Conditions vary greatly in different countries and parts of the world, and pastoral-liturgical directives of the respective hierarchical authorities will therefore differ from each other accordingly. But it is precisely these sometimes striking variations which make it desirable for the central authority to establish some generally valid basic rules which can be observed everywhere and which will insure uniformity of practice in the whole Church.

It may be asked: Why doesn't the Church, or the Roman authorities, issue their directives in advance, instead of delaying until certain practices have already become firmly established? But doesn't the central authority normally have to take for granted that eventual developments will take place in conformity with legislation already

in force? Only when it becomes evident that infringements have occurred will it enjoin existing laws anew.

SOME MAIN POINTS

So far as the content of the Instruction is concerned, it is obviously impossible to enter upon details in the space of an article. Only some of its main points can be briefly treated.

The Instruction is divided into three principal parts: the first gives general concepts (definitions); the second, general norms; and the third, the most detailed of the three, special norms. All told, it comprises 118 numbers. Throughout the Instruction, the laudable effort is clearly made to derive and base more important directives on general liturgical-theological *principles*. The various definitions and clarifications that result should soon become a normal part of practical usage and terminology.

A basic distinction, which no doubt will have to be permanently observed in future, is that which the Instruction makes in no. 1 between "liturgical services" (*actiones liturgicae*) and "devotional services" (*pia exercitia*). The Instruction derives this important distinction from a combination of the theological definition of liturgy found in *Mediator Dei* and the canonical definition found in the Code of Canon Law. Those "sacred services" (*actiones sacrae*) which are performed *officially by the Church* as the *public worship* of the Mystical Body of Christ, are *actiones liturgicae* (liturgical services); all other "sacred services," whether performed within or outside the church, with or without priest, are *pia exercitia* (devotional services). For the former, the official liturgical books approved by the *Holy See* are absolutely and exclusively binding; for the latter, usage and custom as approved by the *bishops*.

These two kinds of sacred services may not be intermingled (no. 12). If, for example, the people are praying the rosary during a low Mass, the celebrant may not interrupt his celebration of Mass in order to lead the rosary, and then continue with the Mass.

The directives about language in nos. 13-15 follow necessarily from the laws currently in force, or from the language discipline of the Roman Church (cf. the general remarks above). The *Latin language* exclusively is obligatory for "liturgical services," unless particular legislation (indults, as in the case of Germany, Austria, etc.) or the liturgical books themselves (e.g., Rituals) determine

or permit otherwise. Existing indulgences retain their validity. For "devotional services" any language is admissible.

From this it follows (no. 14a) that in all *sung* Masses (high Mass, solemn Mass), Latin *only* may be used by the celebrant and his ministers, choir and faithful (except in the case of indulgences, as for the "deutsches Hochamt"). In *low* Masses (no. 14b), a distinction must be made. If the faithful "directly" or "liturgically" pray "together with the priest celebrant" (*una cum sacerdote celebrante*) — in other words, if they pray aloud those parts of the Mass which *directly* belong to them: such as the liturgical responses, parts of the Ordinary and the Proper: cf. no. 31 — this can obviously be done *only* in Latin.

It follows that when the faithful do *not* pray along with him word for word, they may use their own vernacular tongue. The "*una cum sacerdote*" has its prototype in the liturgy of the ordination Mass, in which the newly ordained priests, beginning with the offertory, pray "*una cum episcopo consecrante*" (together with the consecrating bishop) word for word, synchronously — of course, in Latin.

The second paragraph of no. 14b states again that, apart from this "direct liturgical participation" (*participatio liturgica directa*) in the Mass, the faithful may use their *own language* for prayers or popular hymns. Thus, in the case of low Mass, abundant possibilities are open for following the progress of the Sacrifice with the aid of the vernacular, and practices already customary will substantially remain intact.

Number 16 treats expressly of Gregorian chant, which is called the Roman Church's very own song, and therefore, because it is "liturgical" chant, must be sung exclusively in Latin. Moreover, since all liturgical singing, even if not in Gregorian chant, is always an integral part of the liturgy itself, the text must by rights be sung in its entirety and intelligibly.

PARTICIPATION OF THE FAITHFUL

Numbers 22–34 are concerned with the participation of the faithful in holy Mass. General principles are first stated (nos. 22–23), then directives pertaining to sung Masses (nos. 24–27), and finally those for low Masses (nos. 28–34). Though all these points are important, we cannot here do more than sketch main outlines. After all, no priest or anyone else concerned with the liturgy and sacred music

can dispense himself from a personal and detailed study of the Instruction itself.

The general principles, which echo *Mediator Dei* closely, distinguish three ways of participation in the Mass: *interior*, or devotion of heart; *outward*, that is, its fitting external manifestation; and *sacramental*, that is, carried through to its full completion by participation in the sacrificial Meal. From the accord of these three ways there results "harmonious" participation, or what the papal documents call "*actuosa participatio*" (active participation), which is obviously the ideal to be striven for.

There follows a reminder of the need for solid *explanation* of the Mass, something which the Council of Trent had already ordered: for without adequate instruction the people will not understand the Mass, and will therefore not follow its action.

IN SUNG MASSES

Next comes a description of the participation of the faithful in the sung Mass, either solemn or high. Let it be remarked at the outset that the three proposed "stages" or degrees of participation by the faithful in sung Mass are not universally obligatory. But if the people do take "active" part in such Masses, this must be done in the manner described in the Instruction.

The first stage is achieved when the faithful sing the very simple responses: *Amen; Et cum spiritu tuo; Gloria tibi, Domine; Habemus ad Dominum; Dignum et iustum est; Sed libera nos a malo; Deo gratias*. This minimum degree of participation is, be it noted, strongly recommended. If achieved, it would mean that the faithful of the whole world, in this day and age of much travel and migration, could everywhere "actively" take part in a Catholic sung Mass.

In the second stage, the people also sing parts of the Ordinary of the Mass: i.e., the *Kyrie eleison; Gloria in excelsis Deo; Credo; Sanctus-Benedictus; Agnus Dei*. If they cannot sing all of them, then perhaps the most simple; the rest could be done by the choir. A recommendation is in fact made to aim at a "chant Mass for world use": *Kyrie, Sanctus-Benedictus, and Agnus Dei* from Mass XVI; *Gloria* and *Ite-Deo gratias*, from Mass XV; and *Credo* I or III. Pius XII in the encyclical *Musicae sacrae disciplina* had pointed out the significance of such a simple, uniform repertory of chants for the sung Mass if adopted more or less everywhere: for it would make possible

a common celebration of all nations and tongues.

A third stage, finally, would consist in the participants singing also parts of the Proper of the Mass. But this is possible only in religious communities, seminaries, etc.

What has been set down for the solemn Mass is then in no. 26 applied also to the simple high Mass (*missa cantata*). Further and more detailed directions of the document on these points cannot be gone into here.

IN LOW MASSES

Numbers 28–34 concern low Mass (*missa lecta*), that is, the most common form of Mass. The Instruction begins by setting down as a principle that every effort must be made to have the faithful assist even at low Mass not as detached and silent spectators (cf. Pius XI's *Divini cultus*) but that they exercise the kind of participation which is required by the very nature of the Mass mystery and which is truly fruitful for Christian life. Thereby the pastoral task of the clergy in regard to the laity's role in the Mass, the *ordinary daily Mass*, is clearly indicated.

The Instruction distinguishes three ways of assisting at low Mass. The first is when each person present, "on his own initiative" (*propria industria*) assists with internal and external attention. In this context the Instruction underlines the importance of missals for the laity. A pertinent passage of the encyclical *Mediator Dei* is however called to mind: not all are capable of using the missal, nor is it possible at all times for a given individual to do so. It is then reasonable to permit other forms of devotion during Mass.

The second manner of assisting at low Mass is for those present to pray and sing in common, but the prayers and songs used should be suited to the various parts of the Mass. Here the Instruction envisages particularly the use of the vernacular, and grants considerable freedom for its employment.

The third way, finally, of assisting at low Mass is "liturgical" participation in the proper sense of the term. It is achieved when the faithful "respond liturgically" to the celebrant and "say aloud the parts that belong to them." This strict liturgical participation (which is recommended but not prescribed) can take place on four levels, proceeding from a minimum to a maximum participation, analogous to what was laid down for sung Masses.

Thus the first level is when the faithful make the easier liturgical

responses (as above in sung Masses). These will naturally have to be made in Latin — it has not even occurred to anyone up to now, to suggest that the server be permitted to say his responses in the vernacular!

A further step consists in having the participants say all the parts which are ordinarily said by the server, including the prayers at the foot of the altar. Still greater degrees of participation are achieved when the participants recite parts of the Ordinary, and, finally, of the Proper of the Mass (as above in sung Masses). It is expressly stated that this last degree of participation can be employed fittingly only by those who are prepared for it by more advanced training (for example, in institutions of various kinds, seminaries, academic circles, etc.)

There follows (no. 32) a concession which is worth remarking: in low Masses the faithful *may* (not *must*!) recite the entire *Pater noster*, including the *Amen*, aloud “together with the celebrant” (*una cum sacerdote celebrante*: as above, in no. 14b). Since this is *direct* participation, it must be in Latin. For the above-mentioned institutions, religious houses, seminaries, and special groups, this is obviously a splendid concession. However it is not obligatory anywhere. It would not be forbidden, therefore, for the congregation to recite the Our Father aloud in their own tongue *after* the celebrant has said it in Latin; for instance, during the *Libera* prayer that follows the Our Father.

On Good Friday, when the *Pater noster* is recited during the Communion service as the common “meal prayer,” it must be said *only* in Latin. No one will deny, of course, that it would be a splendid thing if all the Catholics the world over were also acquainted with the Latin form of the most ancient prayer-formulas, among them the *Pater noster*.

In no. 33 it is again recalled that popular religious songs during low Masses should be suited to the respective parts of the Mass. Finally, in no. 34, the celebrant is commanded to so raise his voice (particularly in large churches) for all those parts of the Mass which according to the rubrics he must say aloud (*clara voce*) that all the faithful in church will be able to hear him, because otherwise they cannot follow the Mass.

If one looks closely at all these directives of the Instruction concerning the participation of the faithful in the Mass, whether solemn, high, or low, he will realize that no more has been done than to

restate clearly the existing rubrical and musical legislation and to urge that it be put into practice.

The Instruction leaves no doubt that pastoral-liturgical reasons — let us say simply that *the nature and purpose* of the Mass — require that true and fitting participation by the faithful be striven for with all the means at our disposal. The more complete and more “direct” such participation, the better. So long as Latin remains the liturgical language of the Roman Church, it can obviously be *entirely* complete only in Latin — that is by immediate, direct, word-for-word participation “*together with the priest celebrant*” (*una cum sacerdote celebrante*), when this is allowed by the rubrics.

However we have beside this the “indirect” though not less real or less meaningful participation, in the vernacular. It should perhaps be stressed once again that this “indirect” form of participation remains entirely permissible. In every event, the directives as laid down by the Instruction will in future have to be observed.

OTHER POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Since it is clearly impossible to go through the Instruction paragraph by paragraph, we will content ourselves with mentioning briefly a few more points. We would like to repeat forcefully, however, that all priests, church musicians, and all others concerned should feel themselves obliged to obtain a thorough and first-hand knowledge of this Instruction.

The proper recitation of the divine office — more specifically, “in choir” and “in common” (for instance, at gatherings of priests) — is once more earnestly recommended.

The public celebration of Vespers, or at least the holding of the customary popular devotions, is also recommended for Sundays and feastdays. Evening Masses should not simply supplant the devotions that have hitherto been customary on these days. The sanctification of holy days through several kinds of divine service should not fall into disuse.

The following sections on types of Church music, on the instruments that may be used in church, and on bells contain not only specific legislation but also a wealth of pastoral-liturgical material. It may be pointed out that the Instruction expressly urges that the celebration of religious services be not only irreproachable from a

liturgical point of view but also of high artistic excellence. This is the reason for the rigorous exclusion of all that is spurious, and of all automatic or purely mechanical instruments: the liturgy unequivocally demands action that is genuine, immediate, personal.

The pastoral-liturgical significance of nos. 93–103 of the Instruction is again of special importance. They treat of the persons who have the chief roles in sacred music and the liturgy. Number 93 lays down the fundamental principle: it is the *priest celebrant* who presides over the liturgical service. All others participate in it according to their own proper functions.

The clergy who function *as* clergy, in the manner prescribed by the rubrics — that is, either as ministers (major or minor), or in “choir,” or as singers in strict liturgical fashion — exercise a “liturgical ministry which is direct and proper to them” (*servitium ministeriale proprium et directum*); and they do so in virtue of their respective orders, or at least their elevation to the clerical state.

The laity, for their part, exercise an “active liturgical participation” (*participatio actuosa liturgica*), and do so in virtue of their baptismal character. Laity of the male sex, whether boys, young men or adults (be it noted that the Instruction most decidedly does not think merely in terms of boy-servers!), if they are appointed by competent ecclesiastical authority for service at the altar or for performing sacred music, likewise exercise a “liturgical ministry which is direct” (*servitium ministeriale directum*), though “*delegated*.” But in the case of singing, this holds true only if they form part of a separate liturgical choir, or *schola cantorum*, not if they are scattered as individuals among the congregation.

Clergy and people are therefore considered here according to their liturgical-theological status. From this point of view conclusions are then drawn, more especially in regard to the selection of church musicians (in the broadest sense of the term) and their professional training in religious and liturgical matters (nos. 97–98).

Something quite new appears in No. 96, which treats in six points of the “commentator” — or narrator, or leader, or however he is called. This person henceforth has a liturgically recognized and determined role. His function is recommended because, if rightly carried out, it can assure and promote the participation of the faithful. He should preferably be a priest or cleric, and should in that case be vested in surplice, and take his place either in the sanctuary or in the pulpit or ambo. If a layman (male), he should be known

to be a good Christian and be properly instructed; he should stand in a suitable place outside of the sanctuary or pulpit. Women are absolutely excluded from this office. They may, however, in case of necessity, direct the congregation's praying and singing.

The words of the "commentator" should be prepared beforehand in writing (!), they should be brief and clear, not obtrusive, should never dominate over the priest's own formulas of prayer, be arranged to fit in with the actions of the celebrant, and should in general be a contribution to a worthy and devout celebration of the Mass.

Number 100 treats of mixed choirs; nos. 101-103 stipulate that persons engaged for church music should be given a suitable salary in case they do not offer their services gratuitously, and that suitable measures be taken to assure social security for those who have a right to it.

EDUCATION IN LITURGY AND CHURCH MUSIC

The concluding section of the Instruction, nos. 104-118, is divided into two parts. The first part (nos. 104-112) deals with education in liturgy and church music in an ascending order beginning with the family (whose role is strongly emphasized), through elementary and intermediate schools, and on into the universities. The Instruction calls attention to the extraordinary importance of the task of university chaplains, and stresses the special obligation of university students and graduates to be leaders of the faithful also in the public worship of God.

The training in liturgy and church music of those who aspire to the clerical state is of course given particular attention; on this point the Instruction reiterates and re-enjoins what is contained in Canon Law and in various papal documents. It similarly demands a liturgical and church-musical formation proper to their calling for members of religious orders and congregations, and of secular institutes. The respective houses of these groups should always have someone competent to teach such matters.

Certain churches are designated, moreover, as having an obligation to carry out their liturgical services with special dignity and solemnity: such are, cathedrals, larger parish churches, abbey and monastery churches, churches of pilgrimage. Hence persons assigned to these churches ("clergy, ministers, musicians") should have a

better than average training in church music and in carrying out liturgical services worthily.

The final number in this first part (no. 112) deals with the pastoral, liturgical and musical training of the clergy in *foreign missions*. Special importance is attached to the case of highly civilized peoples in mission countries; their religious-musical heritage should as far as possible be protected, and adapted to Christian worship. But in the case of less developed and more primitive cultures, too, missionaries are told to have a sympathetic appreciation of whatever is sound in the native religious-social traditions, and to adapt and use it, if possible, in their missionary work.

FINAL FEATURES

A feature of the Instruction that will not pass unnoticed, is that it several times speaks of the "servers" (*ministrantes*), and that it even specifies them explicitly: "boys, young men, adults." In no. 113, the first number of the section dealing with public and private schools of sacred music, the servers are again mentioned, and especially recommended to the pastoral zeal of pastors and church authorities. The establishment of "boys' choirs" is likewise warmly recommended (whenever this is possible, of course). The ideal proposed is that every church have its own boys' choir.

The Church takes a long-range view of things: she knows that servers' societies and boys' choirs are fertile soil for fostering religious and priestly vocations, and for developing outstanding Christian laymen.

It should be unnecessary to add that the Instruction encourages diocesan and inter-diocesan schools of church music, both elementary and more advanced. The Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome gets particular recommendation. Finally the Instruction strongly urges local Ordinaries to make use of the diocesan commissions of church music, of the liturgical apostolate, and of sacred art as necessary means and guarantees for sound liturgical and musical developments. The establishment of such commissions has, in fact, been called for by the Roman Pontiffs long before this Instruction. Collaboration between these three commissions on a diocesan and even inter-diocesan scale is suggested.

In conclusion we would like to mention that the text of this Instruction was not simply laid before the Holy Father, but that he

personally read it through carefully twice, and added a few annotations of his own. Hence the closing formula of the document, which speaks of the Holy Father's *special* approval and confirmation *of all its parts*, carries particular weight.

Whether and to what degree this Instruction will now have effect in the field of church music and in pastoral-liturgical work will depend entirely upon the reception and collaboration it receives from those whom the Instruction itself calls to action.

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Vice-relator of the Historical Section of the SCR

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