The Perception of Sound in the Liturgy: Changes in Times of Change

JORDI-A. PIQUÉ I COLLADO*

If anything has changed during the twentieth century, it is the perception of the phenomenon of music. The irruption of sound into our lives is accompanied by changes in the use, understanding and enjoyment of music. The liturgy employs music as a sensible element for celebrating the Word and singing the same Word in the sacraments, in the liturgy of the hours and in prayer. For centuries the music was a bridge for the transcendent, today this element is thoroughly affected by the influences of the omnipresence of sound and of the challenge of real sound, that is of authenticity. We will try to respond to the question of what is changing in our societies in the matter of listening, while the liturgy continues to use sound as an element of perceiving the Mystery of God. The attention to the theological weight of these questions will underline the importance of paying attention to the contemporary world of sound for a liturgical understanding.

Keywords: *Theology, Music and Liturgy; Perception of liturgical sound; Languages of Transcendence; Sacred and the change in sacral understanding; Contemporary musical art; Metalanguage; semantic over-run; contemporary musical language; musicological opening; liturgical musical praxis; contemporary formality*

Introduction

If anything has changed during the twentieth century, it is the perception of the phenomenon of music¹. The irruption of sound into our lives

* Prof. Dr. D. Jordi-Agustí Piqué i Collado OSB, Benedictine monk of the Montserrat Abbey, Catalonia-Spain, Dean of the Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, Roma, Italy, Invited Professor in the Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, Address: Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, Piazza Cavalieri di Malta 5, 00153 Roma, Italia, e-mail: 161pique@gmail.com

¹ The paradigm shift in the musical language detonates the canons of musical insertion in the liturgy. Hence the problems of conservation, understanding and adaptation of the historical heritage that has been used for centuries in the liturgy, which seems to have been expelled from their natural liturgical environment, going on to the concert halls and being the heritage of the specialists or the new movements. The change of the musical language paradigm affects greatly the liturgical paradigm. Ignoring this problem hinders the relationship of the present with the past. Much more, the ability to create a contemporary musical language that adheres to the contemporary liturgical paradigm. Many of the current problems in the liturgical musical praxis, at least in the West, I think, deal with ignorance or lack of acceptance of this paradigm shift, that can even be called momentous, which marks our aesthetic, liturgical and ecclesial realities.

is accompanied by changes in the use, understanding and enjoyment of music. Sound forms a part of contemporary culture every day. New means of reproducing sound, technology which permits the presence of sound in any and all environments, have made of music a good to be enjoyed everywhere and at any time. This is completely different to the time that music was an exceptional experience in the lives of people before the arrival of means of recording and reproducing sound.

The liturgy employs music as a sensible element for celebrating the Word and singing the same Word in the sacraments, in the liturgy of the hours and in prayer. For centuries a bridge for the transcendent, today this element is thoroughly affected by the influences of the omnipresence of sound and of the challenge of real sound, that is of authenticity.

On the one hand, the historic patrimony connected to the liturgy has been transferred to the market of cultural use/consumption. We see how a certain kind of music which is eminently liturgical has become instead eminently programmable for concerts². On the other hand, the sacred and sonorous world is employed as ambient music. Sound is used as something that is relaxing and therapeutic while the liturgy is invaded by strange sounds and languages which are far from the culture of the celebrating assembly. The question to be posed in the face of this epochal change would be: are we before a paradigmatic shift in liturgical music or has the paradigm of change entered into the ambit of liturgical music?³

In this article, we will analyse three elements of this process. The first is the understanding of the “sacred” and the change in understanding it regarding music in the liturgy in confrontation with, in the broad sense, sacrality of music in its daily use.

The second is the irruption of the elements which characterise «speaking culture» in the area of universal sound. This phenomenon concerns the new languages of publicity and cinema which use and abuse music for their own ends, while the liturgy is subjected to their influence.

To conclude, we will try to respond to the question of what is changing in our societies in the matter of listening, while the liturgy continues to use sound as an element of perceiving the Mystery of God. The theological weight

² To give some examples of this transmission: The *Requiem* K626 of W. A. Mozart is normally done in concert and perhaps never in a liturgy of the death; A. Bruckner, *Messe* nr. 2 e-Moll WAB 27; the *Vespri della Beata Vergine* by C. Monteverdi; Gregorian chant has also moved to the cultural dimension; or the S. Rachmaninov *Vespers* for alto, tenor & chorus, Op. 37 that is performed in concert halls.

³ Jordi-Agustí Piqué i Collado, “Música litúrgica: «paradigma de cambio o cambio de paradigma» (cien años después del Congreso Litúrgico de Montserrat 1915)”, in: *Phase* 327 (2015), p. 211-226.

of these conclusions will underline the importance of paying attention to the contemporary world of sound and its solution, but only in outline.

1. The changing understanding of the “sacred” and the change in sacral understanding

The Fathers of the Church discussed the appropriateness of music in the liturgy⁴. The category of sung praise, according to the biblical foundation, complied with the need to celebrate the Word. The reality of sound, however, with all the aesthetic and sensuous weight, brought about a judgement of music as an ephemeral and ambivalent art, and corresponding particularly to the senses. Thus, after the first few centuries in which the Church had inherited Hebraic forms of worship and of psalmody, new currents of thought arose which were less attentive to the presence of sound in the celebration of the liturgy⁵.

This dimension of appreciation and diffidence appears in all the documents of the Western Magisterium of the twentieth century which are concerned with music in the liturgy, identified as “*musica sacra*” and analysed as such. The dimension of the “sacred”, however, for some time already, was studied during the same twentieth century from the point of view of phenomenology. Thus, while liturgically one uses the epithet «sacred» when defining that which refers to liturgical dignity, to holiness and quality, but in the field of philosophy, aesthetics and nascent phenomenology – and of anthropology, without mentioning psychology – the adjective refers to that which is “reserved”, “secluded”, “sacral”. This dimension of the expression is taken in contrast with the “profane” as understood in common usage, in the liturgy it comes to the fore as vernacular, far from the “sacred”, and it enters also the field of theology.

When the Second Vatican Council, in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), chapter VI and the instruction *Musicam Sacram*⁶ (1967) speak of

⁴ See: J.-A. Piqué i Collado, *Teología y Música: Una contribución dialéctico-trascendental sobre la sacramentalidad de la percepción estética del Misterio* (Agustín, Balthasar, Sequeri; Victoria, Schönberg, Messiaen), *Tesi Gregoriana*, Serie Teologia 132, Roma, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana 2006. Cipriano Vagaggini, “La teologia della lode secondo S. Agostino”, in: C. Vagaggini (ed.), *La preghiera nella Bibbia e nella tradizione patristica e monastica*, Paoline, Cinisello Balsamo 1988, p. 439 - 442.

⁵ J.-A. Piqué i Collado, “El Canto della Liturgi delle Ore: fede cantata, fede celebrata”, in: E. López-Tello García et al. (eds.), *Carmina laudis Risposta nel tempo all'eterno. La Liturgia delle Ore tra storia, teologia e celebrazione. Atti del X Congresso Internazionale di Liturgia Roma, Pontificio Istituto Liturgico, 6-8 maggio 2015*, Ecclesia Orans Ricerche 1, Roma, Aracne 2016, p. 285-302.

⁶ *Musicam Sacram* (MS 1967) is one of the instructions published after the close of the Second Vatican Council for the application of conciliar decrees. Specifically, *Sacrosanctum Con-*

“sacred music”, like the preceding documents they do not refer absolutely to a “reserved and cryptic” sacrality. Were it so, one could not speak even of a “popularization”, of a participation as an end. Here, “sacred” refers principally to the relationship with the liturgical action and especially to the aesthetic of musical quality⁷.

This fact underlines the problem of how to speak about forms of this music. While Gregorian chant and polyphony had become in fact «sacral forms» for the music in the Western liturgy, forms already far from profane use⁸, the application of liturgical renewal proposed an opening towards new languages and inculturation of forms. The reality of post-Conciliar liturgical music practices went far beyond the limits of semantics, transgressing the barrier of musical quality, of good taste and of the categories which can be considered cultural.

Therefore, when one re-reads *Sacrosanctum Concilium* VI – and also *Musicam Sacram* – it is necessary to read, in the field of semantic over-run⁹, the categories of participation and of liturgical action, or holy forms and perfection of forms. The models refer to a situation which even immediately after the Council was no more and at present suffers from relativism.

This same problem of “semantic over-run” is seen in the dialogue between liturgical music and new, contemporary languages and with the so-called contemporary classical music¹⁰. While the models which are proposed drew from formality, the world of culture tended towards going beyond form. Atonality, serialism and dodecatonality no longer find a place in the

cilium (1963), the Constitution on the liturgy of the Church, saw up to five instructions for the correct application of the conciliar renewal desired by the Second Vatican Council. The instruction focuses on the application of Chapter VI of the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, gleaned from the so-called “Sacred Music”.

⁷ From here all the diatribes of the post-conciliar liturgical music requirements will be born. For some only the forms of the past preserve this “sacredness”; for others, all forms of the past must be overcome to get to an ideal of participation. See : J.-A. Piqué i Collado, “*Venite et audite*: música y fenomenología de la escucha en la liturgia”, in: *Phase* 326 (2015), p. 91-104.

⁸ Today the opposite problem exists: when the liturgical music is used in places having a profane purpose (clubs, relaxation, meditation, background music). Advertising and film know much of this appropriation.

⁹ In our opinion, we mostly encounter a semantic problem. The wish of the SC and the MS, consequently, is to promote a musical practice that is moving towards a conscious participation in the liturgical action, and the Second Vatican Council, heir to the magisterial tradition, sees liturgical singing in the main form. However, at the moment of compiling the primordially ‘sacral’ forms, it uses a language that was borrowed from the human sciences and that has other connotations. See: J.-A. Piqué i Collado, “*Venite et audite*”, p. 91-104.

¹⁰ Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Musik als Klangrede. Wege zu einem neuen Musikverständnis*, St. Pölten, Residenz 2009, p. 293-294.

“sacral” forms. Thus, while the same practice condemned Gregorian chant to oblivion and admitted *pop* and *folk* into liturgical celebration, Blessed Paul VI called for a dialogue with artists¹¹.

If we wish to achieve a fruitful dialogue with contemporary culture, we must transfer the question of sound in the liturgy to the theological field. The aesthetic field is now the property of aesthetics and phenomenological language. It seems to us that this process is particularly capable of overcoming trends which incessantly seek what is “new” to express a radical rupture with tradition, or to promote traditionalism which takes what is “old” as the eminent form of belonging, or shut themselves off from what is new and arrives with new waves of migration, or is fascinated by the novelties of “pop”, of commercial music or contaminate the more mysterious liturgical languages¹².

We may say in the face of this change in the semantic prospective of the “sacred”, 100 years after the work of Rudolf Otto¹³ that the form of understanding the sacrality of sound has exploded. Music and song cannot be interpreted as individual and sacral languages; for this they are subject to the influences and changes of a society which both employs sound and abuses it. The uniqueness of sound can no longer be used as an element of “symbolic presence”. Or perhaps it is necessary to rethink the use of forms and modes to recover the place reserved for sound in liturgical celebration. The recovery of silence shall be an important part of that, since the post-post-modern culture fails in appropriating it and still respects it as a place of transcendent experiential space.

2. Irruption of the characteristic elements of “saying culture” into the field of universal sound

We take the theological aspect for our re-reading of the relationship between sound and liturgy in the contemporary world. One cannot begin without paying attention to music’s position as language in the liturgy. This

¹¹ PAULUS VI, “Bonarum artium cultoribus ex Italica Sodalitate v. d. «Messa dell’Artista», qui in Sacello Sixtino interfuerunt Sacro a Beatissimo Patre celebrato (7 maii 1964)”, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), p. 438-444.

¹² A little while ago I was able to attend a Divine Liturgy in the Syro-Malabar rite, where the songs were accompanied by an electronic keyboard with technically produced rock rhythms, while the celebrant and the choir tried to adapt beautiful songs with the coldness and chaotic rhythm of the modern instrument played by a poor musician.

¹³ Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*, Breslau, Trewendt und Granier 1923.

language takes, in every age, in every region, in every culture, an aesthetic element which translates music in tangible and practical terms¹⁴.

This reality of music as language goes beyond the limits of the means of communication. Thus we shall speak of a language of transcendence when music in the liturgy, paired with the Word, underlines a transcendent sphere where beauty is brought towards an important understanding of the Mystery which is celebrated. Thus, experience of music, which flows in presence and symbolism, is set aside with aesthetics to the point of a “metalanguage” which makes it possible to say something about the Ineffable¹⁵.

Placing the emphasis on the intimate union between liturgical music and liturgical action is the possibility of permitting forms of true art, provided they possess the necessary qualities. These principles are, so to speak, ideally or philosophically well established, but immediately present difficulties of interpretation. These two realities, however, or “intimate union” between music and liturgical action and the quality of the forms which this music takes, have great theological capacity, being translated also in important ecclesial categories.

The union of music and action equals a means of acting in time. This task corresponds with baptismal grace. Only these “habilitated” by the Spirit may exercise the grace of acting intimately with the liturgical action which gives just glory to God and simultaneously sanctifies. This grace, therefore, is manifested as song and music in the liturgical action becoming confession of faith, hierarchical expression of the Church, service of communion. The liturgical action is expressed as sonorous manifestation of the faith. Thus, when any baptised person exercises their liturgical ministry of song, according to their proper role, or also with silence and listening, this action through the metalanguage, in other words the music of the liturgy, becomes liturgical and performative action¹⁶.

¹⁴ See: Ramón Andrés, *El mundo en el oído. El nacimiento de la música en la cultura*, Acanalado, Barcelona 2008, p. 11-92. J.-A. Piqué i Collado, “Palabra, espacio y música: parámetros teológicos de la música litúrgica”, in: *Scripta Theologica* 3 (2015), p. 693-708.

¹⁵ Idem, “Música Sacra/Música Litúrgica: Lenguaje musical y liturgia a cincuenta años de *Sacrosanctum Concilium*”, in: *Phase* 317, p. 501-515; idem, “Palabra, espacio y música: parámetros teológicos de la música litúrgica”, in: *Scripta Theologica* 3 (2015), p. 693-708; Elrnar Salmann, “I sensi del senso – Il senso dei sensi. Una piccola fenomenologia mistico-filosofica”, in: *Esperienza, mistica e pensiero filosofico. Atti del Colloquio Filosofia e Mistica, Roma, 6-7 dicembre 2001, Pontificia Università Lateranense e Pontificio Ateneo Sant’Anselmo*, LEV, Città del Vaticano 2003, p. 87-108.

¹⁶ J.-A. Piqué i Collado, “L’orecchio pensante. Ascoltare il nome trinitario de Dio. Dal Gregoriano a W.A. Mozart e Ch. Gounod”, in: Paolo Tomatis (ed.), *La liturgia alla prova del sacro, Atti della XXXIX Settimana di Studio dell’Associazione Professori di Liturgia*, Convegno

On the other hand, the qualities demanded of the forms in which this music is translated, correspond to a transposition between the realities of culture and the desire for the transcendent of the human being in art. Thus, the dignity of the work of art becomes an element of grace and collaboration in creation. The liturgical action, by concrete forms, without aesthetic limits, is transformed into a means of grace. Concrete musical languages of each period are raised into metalanguages of transcendence.

Therefore, the earthly liturgy prefigures the heavenly. We can say much more, however: this earthly liturgy makes the heavenly one to “hear”. Our musical forms prefigure those celestial realities which shirk any aesthetic limits. That is the area in which we may affirm that music in the liturgy, when it is indeed so, becomes meta-aesthetic, meta-symbolic and guarantees a kind of grace¹⁷.

The necessary dialogue between liturgical forms and aesthetic forms – or cultural – is self-evident. Without a contemporary formality, the metalinguistic dimension of music is not possible. Without a liturgical root musical art dedicated to the liturgy fails in transporting towards a meta-time, nor bring about the “quasi grace” that is apparent in liturgical action. Here is born the difficulty: not to lose oneself in aesthetic or musicological discussions, but to seek the liturgico-musical forms that might have a theological dimension such that they might speak to the moment and to the world as true art.

3. East (and West): their own musical languages and intercultural channels

3.1 Liturgical action and theological sounds

Rabanus Maurus (780-856) in his work *De institutione clericorum*, stated:

This art [music] is so noble and useful, that those who have none can not properly perform an ecclesiastical office. The decorous pronunciation of the readings and gentle modulation of the psalms in the church is governed by the knowledge of this discipline, and by such means we not only read and sing the psalms in church, but we also carry out every divine service in the appropriate way¹⁸

Nazionali di Professori di Liturgia Italia, Brescia 1 settembre 2011, *Studia Liturgica / Nova serie* / 57, CLV-Edizione Liturgiche Roma 2013, p. 245-278.

¹⁷ J.-A. Piqué i Collado, “The Fleeting Moment: The Sacramental Universe of Music, from the Aesthetic Form to the Emphatic Event. Theology and Music: Languages of Transcendence”, in: *Res* 7 (3/2015), p. 169-183; idem, “Vidimus et audivimus: Déu que es revela. Experiència i/o Intel·ligència de La Fe”, *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 39/1 (2014), p. 49-60.

¹⁸ Rabano Mauro, *La formazione dei chierici*, Roma, Citta Nuova Editrice 2002, p. 203.

The people, who have been baptised, under the presidency of the bishop or of the presbyter (priest), carry out their liturgical ministry in a musical fashion. Everyone has their own ministry which is expressed with its own proper liturgical categories and missions. The celebrant, in the name of the whole assembly should sing the *Preface*; the deacon the Gospel; the psalmist the psalm; the assembly should respond and ratify with the “Amen” and the acclamations the actions of he who presides. Thus, the hierarchical order is expressed and the ministerial and musical competences of the various charisms are understood. Thus, from this moment, the singers are also “ministers” of the liturgy.

Therefore, we can establish three theological categories. In the first place ecclesiality which is interpreted in a ministry of sound. Secondly, a dynamic of representation: we may speak of a clear ministry of song and of music which share the ministry of baptism. In third place, we find a dynamic of listening and participating in liturgical song. Understanding the Word, its celebration, is by listening and by responding. This dynamic is very significant because it is found in every culture, either in its peculiar language or in a shared ecclesial language, also in concrete gestures, art and architecture.

These three theological categories translated into musicological elements which one may analyse culturally. Every artist must draw on the cultural resources of their own era to give form to liturgical expression situated between the aesthetic and the poetic¹⁹. Without this relationship, liturgical art risks being only an aesthetic museum piece or even incomprehensible.

3.2 Auditory action and full participation

The challenge of how to act musically in the liturgy in order to arrive at full participation is as yet unresolved. The fact that the understanding of sound has changed has aggravated the difficulty of finding a possible solution to this challenge. On the one hand, there is the danger of losing centuries’ worth of musical patrimony because of the change in the time and structure of liturgical celebrations; on the other hand, we have the difficulty of finding a contemporary language which is suitable for new forms of music and which is neither commercial music nor risks being a kind of speculative art.

This theological consideration relative to the problem of active participation refers to liturgical music, moving the horizon beyond discussions and anthropological theories. Theological listening brings one to an active pro-

¹⁹ Crispino Valenziano already noted the conditions of the possibilities of art in the liturgy, see: Crispino Valenziano, *Scritti di estetica e di poetica. Su l’arte di qualità liturgica e i beni culturali di qualità ecclesiale*, Bologna, EDB 1999, p. 9-27.

fession, one which brings things about, and which, through music, is turned into forms of celebration. Thus, when an assembly sings, it brings about divine grace and, through listening, makes one open to the action of the Spirit. For this, liturgical musical forms must favour listening. The latter must be considered in aesthetic categories which can be interpreted musically and are musically relevant. Every age and every culture has its own categories, while a category which is particularly significant like Gregorian chant could reunite the quality of the meta-cultural with that of the paradigm.

The forms are infinite and they may be inculturated in an infinite number of ways. From this are born the need for formation and for catechesis – including mystagogical catechesis – either for ministers or for all the baptised. Also, here the musical dimension demands consideration for culture. It is the same for silence. Only experience and cultural capacity for expression, understanding and creating contemporary and relevant liturgical musical forms will find confirmation of liturgical participation which is truly performative. In that way, and in a daring form, can we translate this listening and responding as a right and an obligation of the baptised in their liturgical ministry?

3.3 Practical, theological liturgical and musicological principles

The singing (chant) of the liturgy is the form which expresses most clearly the Mystery of grace of the encounter between God and his People. The changes in paradigm of the understanding of sound do not change this fact.

The practical beginning of singing the liturgy finds a theological significance in expressing ecclesiality. This way of participating with singing, particularly in the responses and the acclamations of the liturgical action, constructs and manifests an ecclesial communion of great theological importance. If the earthly liturgy is a foretaste of the heavenly, the ecclesial-sound dimension of the confession of faith will have also an eschatological flavour of the encounter between the Groom and the Bride, the latter celebrating the triumph of her Christ. Theologically they are the song of the redeemed who in the heavenly liturgy sing before the Lamb (Apocalypse 19,1). All is associated with a supreme participatory act which is silence²⁰.

The idea that the People of God gather, singing, on Sunday to celebrate the resurrection of Christ remains clear. It is thus that the joy of the resurrection is expressed, the unity of the faithful is manifested and the hier-

²⁰ Sacrosanctum Concilium 30: "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence".

archy and dynamic union of the festive gathering of the baptised is made visible and audible. A community which sings the liturgy enlivens and makes effective the mystery of Christ's salvation and the presence of the Church as sign and sacrament in the midst of the world²¹.

We see how the dimension of participation in the liturgy through music is eminently theological, escapes any change regarding the understanding of sound. It can change form but not theological substance. The concrete forms of this participation must find exact musical forms which are in conformity with this criterion. The solemn, official and public prayer of the Church, translated musically in relevant, eloquent and aesthetically appealing forms, will render the liturgical ministry of song a living expression of the dialogue between God and his people. And thus, also the history of culture shall be enriched. Thus, shall begin also a fertile dialogue between liturgical art and the contemporary world: heir of past treasures, curator of treasures for the present and for the future; an area of dialogue with theological weight which goes beyond the celebration itself.

Conclusions

Song and music belong fully in the liturgy to give form to the solemn, official and public prayer which gives glory to God and sanctifies the faithful who participate in it actively. Therefore, it has an intrinsic aesthetic dimension, which is also cultural and naturally cultic. It is true, however, that it also has a theological dimension: it prefigures the heavenly liturgy, in a certain way it makes present and permits a participatory hearing. But sometimes, it is rooted in the culture of every single person. It shares in the human limits of space, time and the limits proper to finite beings and their changes. Sometimes, however, it is called to be a language of transcendence which, as we have said, "goes beyond" the limits of itself to become a "meta-language" which cannot be classified with limiting epithets.

²¹ Sacrosanctum Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II: "Constitutio dogmatica de Ecclesia *Lumen gentium* (16 novemberis 1964)", *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 57 (1965), p. 5-75: "Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, (1) to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church. Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. This it intends to do following faithfully the teaching of previous councils. The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ".

In this journey, we have re-read the possibility of a change in the paradigm of the understanding of sound, especially by the irruption of a going beyond the possibilities in the use of music.

We have established the impossibility of describing and of limiting the concept of music in the liturgy. Although defining forms and style can be a good aesthetic exercise, it can lead the music toward a field of endless discussion. The use of music for pastoral ends, for indoctrination or for identifying a group, betrays its purpose, in either innovative or conservative purview. The unresolved influence of the trends extraneous to the liturgy can damage the final end of music in the liturgy. The ultimate finality of liturgical music is linked to the final end of the liturgy. Thus, the theological dimension of liturgical music is where one may search for the proper forms of this music. This shall be liturgical if it expresses the metalinguistic reality which wants to celebrate the whole Christ in the Church, his Bride who appears radiant at the end of time. That shall be the sound dimension of that liturgy which adopts its own concrete categories of every time and culture, without fear of changes which tend towards the same theological end.

We cannot forget that the technical and artistic quality of music in the liturgy must be sought out and favoured. Respecting the needs with regard to time and the liturgical action are elements that cannot be let go. The manifestation of the ecclesial and communitarian quality of the celebrating assembly depends upon a true participation. If Baptism, as we have explained, is a habilitation for liturgical song, one deduces that that specific weight of the liturgy's song is translated also in signs of community and effective charity. The problems of our post-modern time are not limits but rather challenges for finding forms of quality and contemporaneity, which give voice to our prayer and to our worship. The force of the Holy Spirit is made to be heard in the voice of the assembly which sings the "Amen" to the Mystery of the Eucharist and responds with the same Word of God to the singing of the psalms and the liturgical hymns. This dialogical dynamic is eminently metalinguistic with theological consequences.

The challenge is: how to translate this evidence into concrete forms that are musically codifiable? We have need of research, of study and of musical formation for the liturgy. But we need education in listening and in silence. An attentive listening permits the forms of the past to find a worthy place in our celebrations, in order that continuity may be manifested and that one may dialogue with the world culture, the latter lamenting the scarcity of musical quality in Church.

We need a welcoming ear for the new contemporary musical forms which must, however, learn the liturgical norms, the value and dynamic

of the sung Word of God. We need interior silence to permit the Word to resound within us, that we might sing it interiorly. Listening and confession shall be thus fully performative.

With these elements we may begin, in our view, new developments, research, study and practice of music in the liturgy. Liturgical music which ranges from participation in contemporary forms, from quality to sincerity, from tradition to acculturated dialogue, from liturgical to theological, and which permits us to sing and hear the earthly liturgy, even ecumenically, perceiving something of the celestial liturgy which shall not end.