

MUSIC AND THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER: DIFFERING MUSICAL RESPONSES

Tony Way

Following the desire of the Second Vatican Council to reform the liturgy, and in particular, to lead the faithful to that 'full, conscious and active participation ... called for by the very nature of the liturgy', (Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, art. 14) [all documents contained in *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963 - 1979: Conciliar, Papal and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982)] a new *Missale Romanum* appeared in 1969. The people were once again assigned all the responses previously taken by attending clerics and three new eucharistic prayers were included as alternatives to the Roman canon. In all the eucharistic prayers an additional acclamation was provided for the people after the institution narrative. The reformed liturgy abolished the practice of saying most of the eucharistic prayer *sotto voce* and established that the majority of celebrations would be in the vernacular. The liturgy was to be revised in such a way that would 'bring out more clearly the intrinsic nature and purpose of [the liturgy's] several parts and the connection between them' so that participation could be more readily achieved. (CSL, 50)

To reflect these changes complete chant settings of the eucharistic prayers were provided in both latin and vernacular language editions. In 1974, five new prayers were issued, three for use with children which contain further acclamations with some basis in eastern liturgical practice. In the case of the children's prayers settings of the acclamations were provided, but not complete settings of the prayers [eg in *Masses with Children, Masses of Reconciliation* (Ottawa: Canadian Catholic Conference, 1975)].

The General Instruction on the Roman Missal describes the eucharistic prayer as the 'centre and summit of the entire [eucharistic] celebration' and as a prayer of 'thanksgiving and sanctification', the meaning of which 'is that the entire congregation joins itself to Christ in acknowledging the great things God has done and in offering the sacrifice.' (art. 54) Despite the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy naming music as a necessary and integral part of the liturgy (art. 112),

and calling for 'full, conscious and active participation' (art. 14), the General Instruction calls for 'all to listen in silent reverence [to the eucharistic prayer], but also to take part through the acclamations for which the rite makes provision.' (art. 55)

The tension between 'full, conscious and active participation' and 'silent reverence' is keenly felt today as most worshippers perceive this part of the liturgy as a long monologue which they interrupt with a few short acclamations. The 'acclamations for which the rite makes provision' are few in number, except in the case of the children's prayers. The normal acclamations are the responses to the opening dialogue, the Sanctus/Benedictus, the memorial acclamation and the final Amen. It is interesting to note that the memorial acclamation only rates a passing mention in the General Instruction. (art 17a) The Bishops' Committee on Liturgy of the USA in addressing the tension between the long presidential texts and the short acclamations of the assembly suggested repeating or augmenting the final Amen. (*Music in Catholic Worship*, 1972, art. 58).

Despite provision for the complete musical rendering of the prayers, it would appear that in the English-speaking world at least, musical participation in the prayer is limited to the three acclamations in the official texts: viz. the Sanctus, the memorial acclamation and the final Amen. Ministerial chanting of the eucharistic prayer and other liturgical texts is seldom experienced outside cathedrals or other major churches. This contrasts sharply with the practice of the eastern churches, where the liturgy is always sung, and there are a large number of acclamations throughout the anaphora.

To understand more fully the issues involved in providing music for the eucharistic prayer, it will be necessary to understand the function of its constituent parts. Article 55 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal enumerates these as follows:

A: THANKSGIVING

- especially in the preface
- presider in the name of the entire people of God, praises the Father for the work of salvation (sometimes related to feast or season)

B: ACCLAMATION

- thanksgiving culminates in the angelic hymn, the Sanctus

C: EPICLESIS

- invocation (normally to the Spirit) that the bread and wine become

Christ's body and blood, normally known as the 'consecratory epiclesis'

- further invocation (to the Spirit) that communion be efficacious, normally known as the 'communion epiclesis'

D: INSTITUTION NARRATIVE

- recounting of the Last Supper and Christ's own words
- seen by GIRM as the consecration

E: ANAMNESIS

- memorial of Christ's passion, resurrection and ascension
- people's memorial acclamation precedes this in official texts

F: OFFERING

- the church, especially those gathered, offer Christ's sacrifice to the Father, and pray to more fully offer themselves

G: INTERCESSIONS

- emphasises that eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole church, living and departed

H: FINAL DOXOLOGY

- trinitarian formula of praise to which the people's acclamation is an assent and conclusion.

It can be seen from this outline that the definitions of the various parts of the prayer are primarily theological and that there are many parts of the prayer in which the people have no part. This does not only lead to boredom through lack of participation, but also limits awareness of the prayer's many parts, because there is no specific entrée into them. (especially the anamnesis, the epiclesis, the offering and the intercessions). In this respect, the 'intrinsic nature and purpose' of the various parts of the liturgy's highpoint are not clearly defined by the rite, as its reformers might have hoped. (cf CSL, 50)

To further fulfil the spirit of the Vatican II documents and increase the participation of the faithful and the perceived unity of the prayer, much experimentation has taken place. This has included the trial use of new acclamations [eg *Acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayer* (Ottawa: National Liturgical Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1985)], often without through-composed musical settings. These lack any suggestions about how to be linked with the

rest of the prayer. Also a large body of through-composed settings of prayers have appeared in the English-speaking world. [A comprehensive list is appended to *The Eucharistic Prayer: Praise of the Whole Assembly*, Gelineau trans (Grover, Washington: The Pastoral Press, 1985)]. Many of these rely on the advanced vocal skills of the presider, and many also incorporate additional acclamations for the assembly, but none draw on a common approach to the associated questions of musical/ritual unity and heightened participation.

Joseph Gelineau, a French Jesuit, well known for his settings of the Psalms, has developed a 'celebratory model' for the eucharistic prayer, based largely on the vast heritage of eastern euchology. This model is founded on his belief that the prayer has its own internal dynamic, that can be likened to the four movements of a symphony. The first movement is an outpouring of praise; the second, an expansion into a memorial thanksgiving; the third, a subsiding into supplication, resurfacing into a final doxology of praise. [see ed. Gelineau *Manuel de pastorale liturgique: Dans vos assemblées*, Volume 2 (Paris: Desclée, 1989), 488 - 491 as well as 'Le Mouvement interne de la prière eucharistique', *Le maison dieu*, 94 (1968), 114 - 124 and 'Les interventions de l'assemblée dans le canon de la messe, *LMD* 87 (1966), 141 - 149].

This he then translates into a *modus operandi* for the prayer:

INITIAL DIALOGUE

- use official musical text: a clear launching of the prayer

PREFACE

- linked to preceding dialogue
- whether said or sung it maintains a high tone of praise

SANCTUS

- a suite of acclamations containing
- adoration ('Holy ...')
- admiration ('Heaven and earth ...')
- supplication ('Hosanna ...')
- acclamation ('Blessed ...')
- final exclamation ('Hosanna ...'), musically inconclusive leads to

FIRST ('CONSECRATORY') EPICLESIS

- reiteration of God's holiness leading to invocation of the Spirit
- use of chant to precede this first epiclesis:

- Come, Spirit of the most holy God, Sanctify for us this bread and cup

INSTITUTION NARRATIVE

- use of 'Amen' after each section of the narrative
- or some other acclamation, eg 'Body of Christ, given up for us', or 'Blood of Christ, poured out for us'.

ANAMNESIS

- memorial acclamation is placed AFTER anamnesis, to underline memorial function or,
- the use of another text, eg 'we praise you, we bless you, we thank you', because this is the culmination of the memorial thanksgiving

SECOND 'COMMUNION' EPICLESIS

- could be underlined with an invocation, eg
- Fill us Lord with your Holy Spirit, may we become the body of your Son
- too great a symmetry with the first epiclesis to be avoided

INTERCESSIONS

- while eastern anaphoras may have litanic intercessions, it is best not to outweigh the elements of praise, and impede its movement to the

FINAL DOXOLOGY

- final 'bouquet' of praise
- use of 'Amen' interspersed with the trinitarian formula preferable

Several simpler, more prosaic solutions Gelineau specifically rejects. These include the use of oft-repeated refrains during especially during the preface and Sanctus. These, he states, are useful for large-scale events, but ultimately make for boredom. The use of strophic verses used at various points in the prayer introduce a symmetry which he believes is at odds with its asymmetrical dynamic.

Another practical element in making this 'celebratory model' work has been gleaned from Gelineau's knowledge of eastern practices. This is the 'ekphonesis', literally a raising of the voice which heralds a new acclamation. This aids the transition from spoken to sung elements within the eucharistic prayer.

In attempting to describe the breadth of experimentation and the

differences of approach to setting the eucharistic prayer, we shall compare the setting of Eucharistic Prayer II for Reconciliation from *No Greater Love* by Michael Joncas (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1988), with the setting of the roman canon from the *Messe du premier mode* by André Gouzes, a French Dominican. (2nd edn, Sylvanès, 1987).

Joncas adopts the following structure:

PREFACE DIALOGUE

- alternation between presider and choir/congregation, with final choral elaboration
- instrumental link to

PREFACE

- metrical through-composed with optional choral elaboration
- leads directly to

HOLY, HOLY

- sung by all, instrumental link to

POST-SANCTUS

- metrical, through-composed

INSTITUTION NARRATIVE

- free rhythm, limited vocal range for the introduction
- dominical words set metrically
- memorial acclamation after bread and after cup

POST-NARRATIVE

- metrical, using different melodic material from before
- optional choir ostinato ('miserere nobis') under presider
- instrumental link to

DOXOLOGY/AMEN

- metrical, using melodic material from Holy
- brief Amen for congregation with choral elaboration after presider has sung doxology.

Despite considerable musical elaboration, the congregation is only

offered one more opportunity than is customary to join in the prayer, viz. the additional memorial acclamation after the narrative relating to the bread. This is the only alteration to the structure of the official text and contrasts sharply with Gelineau's suggestions. Joncas allows for various modes of performance or 'solemnization' of the prayer that allow for the presider to either say all or some of the presidential parts of the prayer. The greater the amount of sung material, the more obvious this prayer's unity becomes.

Gouzes establishes a pattern of call and response, reminiscent of the anaphoras of the eastern churches in his setting. Each sentence of the text of the roman canon is set to a simple chant, whose conclusion triggers a response.

The structure is as follows:

PREFACE DIALOGUE

SANCTUS

[CANON ROMAIN]

POST-SANCTUS (Offering and Intercessions for the Living,

Offering chant formula 1 and response:

Prayer for the Church) 'Acceuille-les, Seigneur'

Prayer for Pope and ministers)

Prayer for those present etc chant formula 2 and response:

(3 times) 'Seigneur, souviens-toi'

Memorial of the saints chant formula 3 and response:

(4 times) 'Qu'ils intercedent pour nous auprès de toi'

Conclusion of Offering chant formula 1

'Par ... notre Seigneur' (x2) simple 'Amen'

INSTITUTION NARRATIVE

introduction chant formula 4

dominical words continuation harmonised

followed by extended 'Amen'

this structure for both bread and cup.

ANAMNESIS

memorial acclamation in normal position
 memorial prayer extended chant formula 1
 response 'Accepte-la, Seigneur'

OFFERING

two sentences chant formula 1
 response each time 'Accepte-la, Seigneur'
 prayer for effects of communion simple 'Amen'

INTERCESSIONS FOR THE DEAD

two sentences chant formula 2
 response 'Seigneur, souviens-toi'
 'par Christ ...' simple 'Amen'

MEMORIAL OF THE SAINTS

prayer for heavenly communion chant formula 5
 memorial of women saints
 response each of 4 times 'Accorde-le, Seigneur'

CONCLUSION AND DOXOLOGY

introduction to doxology unison chant formula 1
 doxology harmony chant 1
 extended 'Amen' (same as institution narrative).

In Gouzes's Messe, the through-composed setting and the modified text allow the eucharistic prayer to be perceived by all as a discrete ritual unit, and also as a prayer of the whole assembly. Despite the prolix structure of the roman canon, sui generis amongst eucharistic prayers, the spirit of the conciliar documents is more concretely realized.

Providing music for the eucharistic prayer does not simply consist of setting a text to music. The task facing today's liturgical composer is far more complicated. To present the prayer as a total ritual unit while giving expression to its various parts, and to express its nature as the prayer of the whole assembly may well involve some restructuring of the official texts, and the creative deployment of available musical resources.

It is also good to remember that the experience of the eucharistic prayer depends on more than the music we give it and its performance. It also depends on other non-verbal symbols such as the posture adopted by the assembly throughout the prayer, the

architectural qualities of the building where the eucharist is celebrated, and the physical proximity of the people to the altar. [see R. Kevin Seasoltz, 'Non-Verbal Symbols and the Eucharistic Prayer' in *New Eucharistic Prayers*, ed. Frank C. Senn (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 214 - 236.]

The many considerations influencing the eucharistic prayer underline the fact that the centre and summit of our eucharistic celebrations still constitutes a major challenge for all involved in the liturgy.

Victoria