

LITURGY NEWSLETTER

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Summer 2008

A quarterly newsletter prepared by the National Liturgy Office
of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

“Summertime and the living is easy, fish are jumping and the cotton is high.” This song makes its annual appearance around this time of year. For those of us who have come through the 2008 winter of our discontent, it symbolizes our need for the re-creation of spirit that the warmth and pace of summer can bring.

But for many, when we think of parish life in the summer, another refrain comes to mind: “Where have all the flowers gone?” Where have all the children gone, now that religion classes have ended? Where has all the music gone now that the cottages have opened? It’s an often heard complaint. There are parishes however that are so grateful for the summertime. They are in smaller, rural communities and the influx of the summer crowd increases the size of both their assembly and the collection — let’s not be coy about this; many depend on the extra revenue to survive. But for all parishes, the summertime period poses special challenges when it comes to liturgical ministries. In this newsletter, Margaret Bick and Fr. Ken Pearce offer challenging reflections on doing liturgy in the season of sun, sand and barbecues.

I realize that we are putting this out when summer is already at mid-point. Our hope is that this newsletter will provide a starting point for discussion at the first meeting of the liturgy committee in September, when the memory of summer liturgy is still fresh. It could then serve as a sort of “mystagogical” discussion that might lead to some concrete proposals for next year.

Have a blessed and holy summertime. May it be a time for us to sing in the words of *Psalm 19* “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.”



Father Bill Burke
Director, National Liturgy Office

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Fond Farewell: Maureen Shaw retired from her position as secretary of the National Liturgy Office on May 31, 2001. Although we congratulate her and rejoice that she can now spend more time with her children and her beloved grandchildren, we hate to say good-bye. During her time here she served the office well with her competence, warm personality and generous sense of service. Thank-you for everything Maureen.

At the same time, we welcome our new secretary, Jessica Rached. Jessica has been with us only a short while but she brings many talents to the office and we are very pleased to have her with us. If you visit us on the right day, you might even get treated to some of her Lebanese pastry.

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LITURGY FOR A SUMMER ASSEMBLY

by Margaret Bick

Margaret Bick is a member of the Ontario Liturgical Conference. She holds a Master's degree in Liturgical Theology from the Univ. of Notre Dame. She is the former editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy and is a well known writer and consultant in the area of liturgy.

THE GIFT OF REST

I wish it weren't true, but I'm afraid it is: ten years after its publication, Pope John Paul II's Pentecost 1998 letter to the Church, *Dies domini*, "On Keeping the Lord's Day," seems to be one of his best kept secrets. Having lived with this document for a year while working on two issues of the *National Bulletin on Liturgy* (nos. 156 and 157) devoted to it, I became enthralled with John Paul's vision of the weekly day of the Lord. It set in motion several changes in my lifestyle and continues to raise my awareness of the sickness that plagues our society in which rest is so rare and in which so many refuse the chance to rest when it is offered.

John Paul depicts Sunday's rest and celebration as essential to human welfare and dignity. If we do not call ourselves to a regular schedule of rest and celebration, we risk our very humanity. As a day of rest, joy and fellowship, Sunday is a gift we easily take for granted. It's not easy to unplug the computer, stuff the blackberry in the sock drawer and stay away from the malls. But the measure of our difficulty with these things is directly proportional to how deeply we have bought into the sickness of our society that frowns on rest.

Within Sunday, the heart of the week, the Sunday liturgy is the peak moment. The body of Christ is called together in a spirit of joy and fellowship to celebrate the mystery of life with God in Christ, the head of the body. And this happens 52 Sundays a year. We do not take a holiday from sacred rest and celebration. I suspect it is true that we need the Sunday liturgy even more during vacation time to remind us what our vacation is all about. So, although it might require a different kind of attention from those who prepare the parish liturgy, summer liturgy still requires and deserves careful attention.

A SUMMER REALITY

There are two kinds of parishes here in Canada: those that empty in summer and those that swell in summer. Come the end of May, many parishes across the nation experience a noticeable thinning out in the pews. To make matters worse, the availability and reliability of ministers in these parishes is often reduced. Meanwhile, parishes in vacationland experience a population explosion, with Sunday assemblies of strangers, visitors who do not know the parish—or know it for only a few months each year—and do not know one another. In some extreme cases there are local church buildings that are used solely in summer, housing parishes that exist solely or mainly seasonally.

This seasonal population shift offers many challenges to our parishes; yet, the responsibility of facilitating the prayer of these assemblies remains, regardless of the weather or the demographic.

If we are to take Pope John Paul II's letter seriously, then those who prepare the Sunday liturgy should aim at facilitating a peak moment in a vacation rather than a minimalized, record-breaking, "in-and-out-as-fast-we-can" experience. Summer vacations have the same functions that John Paul assigns to Sunday: rest, fellowship and joy. So rather than being experienced as an inconvenient interruption of our vacation, Sunday liturgy should in fact find a comfortable home in the midst of it. Vacation time offers us a unique opportunity to make the most of the gift of Sunday. If vacationers shape their time away from home and work with the view of making the whole of Sunday special, and if parishes help people to see Sunday liturgy in the bigger context of God's gifted day of rest, fellowship and joy—even if it's not our own particular vacation time—, summer liturgy need not become a shadow of its normal self nor a barely manageable exercise in crowd control. This article is offered as a help to parishes in meeting all the challenges of summer liturgy from Canada Day—or in some cases Victoria Day—to Thanksgiving Day.

EVERYBODY WANTS TO BE HERE

Those responsible for parish liturgy must keep in mind that those who gather on Sunday, each and every Sunday, really want to be there, regardless of the time of year. Gone are the days when people show up simply out of obligation or the fear of hell; let's put that idea to rest. Assume that everyone present has strong reasons to be there. And they are probably accustomed to a high level of participation. With this in mind we can go about our business of creating a context for a joyous encounter with the divine, whether the worship space is close to empty or bursting at the seams.

PACK YOUR GIFTS WITH YOU

Some people spend every weekend or even the whole summer at vacationland parishes. Some of these people are liturgical ministers in their home parish. Home parish pastors would do well to give these faithful Catholics a nudge to offer their gifts to their summer parish.

Some parishes that experience a population explosion invite their summer parishioners to do so. They welcome the new blood and increased energy level that greater numbers offer. At least one Ontario parish—with 25 families in winter and several hundred families in summer—invites all vacationing liturgical ministers, even experienced parish council members, to continue their ministry in their summer parish. The migrants become part of May to October ministry group. And yes, they even have a special summer parish council and liturgy committee! This is when the community is most active. Ministers who own summer properties and make themselves known to the parish leaders are contacted each year and scheduled for service when they know they will be available. This often eases the burden for local ministers in tiny communities who normally have to serve every week or serve in multiple ministries when the community is smaller. When this spirit of inclusion pervades the Sunday assembly, vacationers, even those who are not liturgical ministers, often report that they feel just as much a part of their summer parish—if not moreso—as in their home parish.

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FORUM CONVOCATION

Fifth International Convocation

The North American Forum
on the Catechumenate

November 6-8, 2008
Cleveland, Ohio

Gather with parish, diocesan, and national leaders from throughout North America and beyond to:

- Rediscover the Church's identity as an apprenticing community that hands on its faith to others
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- Be renewed for initiation ministry by celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the 25th anniversary of Forum!

DATES & DEADLINES

Early Bird Deadline:
September 25, 2008

Registration Deadline:
October 27, 2008

For information about the Convocation and to register online, go to:

http://www.naforum.org/new_site/calendar/calendar.php?curr_page=calendar&d=2

CHOOSING MUSIC FOR SUMMER

Familiar

Here is an easy rule of thumb for summer liturgy regardless of which kind of parish you are: Stay with what the people know. Offer them a feast of their favourite liturgy-worthy hymns and psalms of praise and thanksgiving. The Sundays of summer are not the time for introducing or showing off new or unique music. In fact, with all the factors at play during these weeks, a **greatly reduced** repertoire is called for.

The best start at choosing music for summer is to draw up a list of the parish's best known general hymns of praise. Be sure that your list is a real reflection of what your parish knows and sings well, not what they **should** know and sing well. From your list choose a small handful that you will use for entrance and presentation of the gifts (and recessional, if desired) on a rotating basis through the Sundays until Thanksgiving Day when the rhythm of life returns to normal. (We're not forgetting or minimizing the communion song. We will address it below.)

Finding music everyone knows might be difficult for parishes that experience a summer population explosion, but help is available if you plan in advance. The *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, Number 176 (Volume 37, Spring 2004) contains "The Hymn Locator" which was graciously and painstakingly compiled by Christina Ronzio. This is a list of all the songs in nine hymnals commonly used in Canada, along with an indication of which of the hymnals each song appears in. If a parish really wants to be visitor-friendly during vacation time, music ministers can check the hymn locator to select songs that appear in several hymnals, thus greatly increasing the probability that this assembly of will be able to feel at home and participate in our sung liturgy.

Put Themes on the Back Burner

Remember to choose songs of praise. The eucharistic prayer, which is the heart of the Mass, is one of high praise and thanksgiving. It outlines the wonderful and mighty deeds of God on behalf of humanity, the culmination of which is Jesus the Christ, the ultimate revelation of God and the salvation of humanity. "It is right to give our thanks and praise." A general hymn of praise for a processional song is always appropriate. A joyful entrance song that sings the glories of the God's creation will quickly draw the summer assembly into song. And remember: If the entrance song does not "work," it's like pushing a boulder uphill to get the song going throughout the whole liturgy.

Don't let the gospel story dictate every song. In fact the gospel passage doesn't have to dictate any of your choices. It is the homilist's task to open up the good news of the gospel passage in such a way that those in the assembly are truly led to lift up their hearts in the eucharistic prayer. It is the musicians' task to help those hearts to sing out God's praise.

Eucharistic Acclamations

It's a good idea to keep the eucharistic acclamations the same for the whole summer and to choose a setting widely used throughout the

country. My guess is that Marty Haugen's "Mass of Creation" acclamations are the best known throughout North America. We are a very mobile society in the summer and this merely seems a basic issue of hospitality. We do want summer travellers to be able to sing — tourists and returning university students as well as visiting relatives. If you have written your own parish acclamations, perhaps you could put them to pasture until the fall in favour of something more universally known.

The Communion Song

Sing a communion song at communion time. Thirty years ago a lot of people thought that a communion song was whatever the choir sang during the communion procession. We have learned better in the meantime. The communion hymn is defined clearly in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*: "During the priest's and the faithful's reception of the sacrament the communion song is sung. Its function is to express outwardly the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to give evidence of joy of heart, and to make the procession to receive Christ's body more fully an act of community" (GIRM 56i).

Settings of the traditional communion psalms, 23 "The Lord is my shepherd" and 34 "Taste and see," sung in responsorial style will make assembly participation easy. Other songs related to the community's sharing in the Body and Blood of the Lord are also very fitting, especially if they have a refrain in which the assembly is able to join without carrying a hymnal in the procession. In *Catholic Book of Worship III* communion songs generally appear between 597 and 612. Familiarity of music at this point in the Mass is crucial. One or two different communion songs at most will suffice for the Sundays of the whole summer.

Seasonal Psalms for Summer

A convenient strategy for simplifying the summer music program is the use of the seasonal psalms of Ordinary Time. These are listed at #114 in *Catholic Book of Worship III*.

In Year A (2008, 2011, 2014) the summer gospel passages recount Jesus' parables of the kingdom, some of Jesus' miraculous deeds, and the story of Peter's recognition of Jesus as Messiah. The Old Testament readings define the focus of each of these passages, and prepare listeners to respond after the manner of Peter, declaring Jesus to be the fulfillment of God's promise. Psalm 145 is the prescribed psalm for two of the Sundays of summer in Year A and is on the list of seasonal psalms of Ordinary Time. The text is an expression of praise which is easily matched with the first readings of these Sundays. In *CBW III*, Michel Guimont's setting of psalm 145 is found at #204. The refrain is pleasant, easy and memorable, making it an ideal piece in the summer repertoire.

In Year B (2009, 2012, 2015) the summer gospel passages begin with a recounting of the first mission experience of the apostles. Then comes John's account of Jesus' teaching on the "bread of life," which ends with Peter's profession of faith. As in Year A, the Old Testament readings define the focus of each of these passages, and prepare listeners to respond in faith, as Peter did, declaring Jesus to be the

The time has come to blow the whistle. At every level —parish, community, diocesan, national and international— we should be reacting against pressures that distract us from the main thrust of Sunday.

(*National Bulletin on Liturgy*, vol. 6 no. 39, 1973, p.132.)

Christians are supposed not merely to endure change nor even to profit by it, but to cause it.

(Harry Emerson Fosdick)

The spiritual and pastoral riches of Sunday, as it has been handed on to us by tradition, are truly great. When its significance and implications are understood in their entirety, Sunday in a way becomes a synthesis of the Christian life and a condition for living it well. It is clear therefore why the observance of the Lord's Day is so close to the Church's heart, and why in the Church's discipline it remains a real obligation. Yet more than as a precept, the observance should be seen as a need rising from the depths of Christian life. It is crucially important that all the faithful should be convinced that they cannot live their faith or share fully in the life of the Christian community unless they take part regularly in the Sunday Eucharistic assembly. The Eucharist is the full realization of the worship which humanity owes to God, and it cannot be compared to any other religious experience.

(*Dies Domini* no. 81)

fulfillment of God's promise. Psalm 34 is prescribed for three of the Sundays of summer in Year B and is linked with the teaching on the "bread of life." This psalm also falls within the category of psalms of praise. In *CBW III*, two excellent settings of this psalm are found at #167, written by Stephen Dean, and #173, by Christopher Walker. The verses of the Walker setting are particularly interesting. *CBW II* contains a setting by David C. Isele, whose material is always high quality (#414), and another by Irene Brustle (#284). Even those who use the psalm of the week would do wise to choose one musical setting to use on the three Sundays where it is prescribed (19th, 20th 21st), making sure to use the verses appropriate to each.

In Year C (2010, 2013, 2016) the story of Peter's profession of faith is proclaimed on the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, which usually falls in June. The summer gospel readings deal with the fallout of one's having made this declaration: the nature of discipleship, the personal cost of throwing in one's lot with Jesus, and the demands placed on those who declare Jesus the Messiah. Again the Old Testament readings define the focus of each of these passages. Psalm 103 is a versatile psalm of praise which is among the seasonal psalms for Ordinary Time. The verses chosen for seasonal use relate well to the first readings of the Sundays of the summer of Year C. David M. Young's setting of psalm 103 is in both *CBW III* and *CBW II*. It is short and melodic, well-suited to a summer assembly.

Canada Day and Thanksgiving Day

It is possible to give some attention to our nation on the Sunday nearest Canada Day (July 1) without singing "O Canada" at Mass. We can pray for our leaders, for the people across our great land, for our military personnel far from home, and for specific national concerns of the times in the general intercessions. In *Catholic Book of Worship III*, "O God of All the Many Lands" (594) is a rousing sung prayer for our nation with a familiar old melody and may be used as a recessional.

For the Christian every Sunday is "Thanksgiving Day," that is what eucharist is about. But since Canada's Thanksgiving Day is a secular celebration of the harvest, songs of praise that mention the gifts of creation are appropriate on the surrounding Sundays. *Catholic Book of Worship III* groups songs of gratitude together around 531 through 537.

PLAN AHEAD TO KEEP THE SONG ALIVE

By now many might be thinking: Wait a minute! Church musicians need a break too! Of course, everyone, even a church musician, is entitled to a little holiday. In fact, time off for parish musicians is a must. If nothing else, they should be sponsored by the parish to attend conventions and summers schools which will allow them to re-charge, connect with other musicians and gain new skills and understandings.

But it's often a challenge to find replacements so that music leadership does not collapse during the summer. Ask around about students returning from university who might actually be studying music. You may be surprised at the talent that you find when necessary and you may give some young person a taste for serving in this wonderful ministry as cantor, leader of song or instrumentalist. They are more likely to respond favourably if they are asked well in

advance and given the music in plenty of time to feel confident. You might also discover additional instrumentalists such as flautists and string players to add to your group for the summer! After all, Ordinary Time need not be ordinary, as contradictory as that sounds.

Choirs will likely abandon their weekly practices because of declining numbers over the summer, but there is absolutely no reason why they need abandon their responsibility to lead the assembly at the Sunday celebrations. After all, if the music chosen is known well by the whole assembly, then surely the choir can sing it without rehearsal. It can be unison singing if the parts no longer balance in summer. In fact, you may want to experiment by having the choir seated throughout the assembly in which they usually minister or seated as a group near the back of the church as a way of bolstering the assembly's singing. Of course you need to discuss this with the choir and gain their full cooperation. Too often choir members begin to see themselves as separate from the rest of the assembly instead of a part of the assembly, especially if they sing in a loft. Help them to see themselves as a part of the assembly instead of apart from the assembly. Their very *raison d'être* is to foster unity by singing together God's praise.

Well in advance of vacation season, find out who will be around and when: instrumentalists, cantors, leaders of song, and yes, priests. It is especially important to have confident, communicative musical leadership on hand if a visiting priest will be presiding. On the Sundays when the parish priest is on vacation, make sure that someone is in charge of communicating with the visiting priest about what happens musically in your parish. Have it available for him in writing. It's probably not necessary to give him numbers and titles, but he must know when to expect the assembly to burst into song.

When instrumentalists will be on vacation, they should find a replacement who is familiar with the repertoire of the assembly they will be serving. This is where a common parish repertoire comes in handy. If everyone knows the same setting of the acclamations and a small body of hymns, replacement work will not be a problem. If you are doing replacement work, remember to work with the repertoire of that assembly. Don't impose your tastes on them; you are there to serve them. Regulars and replacements need to work together to choose the music for these occasions.

In smaller parishes finding a replacement might require networking with musicians at neighbouring parishes. You might arrange a mutual trade-off for vacation time. Once again the hymn locator mentioned above could be used to find songs familiar both to the visiting musician and the assembly.

Consider combining music groups for a Sunday or two; add other instruments to your regular group; seek out ways of enriching and heightening the joyful nature of the Sunday eucharist in these beautiful precious months. We are all perhaps more open to joy when the weather is fine. Ordinary Time can really be extraordinary if we listen to the words of the psalm and "enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise." Let us make a joyful noise!

In the end all you need is someone to get the ball rolling-a leader of song. If you have developed confident cantors and leaders of song,

In our own historical context there remains the obligation to ensure that everyone can enjoy the freedom, rest and relaxation which human dignity requires, together with the associated religious, family, cultural and interpersonal needs which are difficult to meet if there is no guarantee of at least one day of the week on which people can both rest and celebrate. Naturally, this right of workers to rest presupposes their right to work and, as we reflect on the question of the Christian understanding of Sunday, we cannot but recall with a deep sense of solidarity the hardship of countless men and women who, because of the lack of jobs, are forced to remain inactive on workdays as well.

(Dies Domini no.66)

The Eucharist and the poor are
but one love for me.
(Blessed Teresa of Calcutta)

The charity of truth seeks holy
leisure; the necessity of charity
accepts just work.
(St. Augustine)

the song can continue even without instruments. Be sure to work closely with the leader of song to choose songs that both the leader and the assembly will be comfortable with. When it really is necessary to simplify, remember to keep the essentials: entrance song, psalm refrain (seasonal if necessary), gospel acclamation, eucharistic acclamations, communion song. It does a disservice to the liturgy, to Sunday, and to the assembly if we fail to put in the effort required to maintain a lively, joyful liturgy program that builds these odd assemblies into communities of fellowship and faith regardless of how small or temporary.

IDEAS ANYONE?

Has your parish come up with effective solutions to summer population shift? Share the wealth. Let us know about them and they just might make their way into the newsletter next year.

SUMMERTIME AND THE LITURGY IS...

By Kenneth Pearce

Kenneth Pearce, a presbyter of the Archdiocese of Toronto, is active in several parishes in the Archdiocese.

Don't panic! This is not a discourse trying to convince you that summertime eucharists have to be celebrated in exactly the same way as liturgies during the rest of the year. Summer is and will likely remain the season when people travel, take vacations or just plain ignore—in favour of sun and independence—the carefully prepared schedules that support ministry during the rest of the year. A schedule on the refrigerator door is no match for a summer day even for the most committed of volunteers.

But that does not mean that summer Sunday celebrations can be relegated to a catch-it-if-you-can style. After all, July and August (with a bit of June and September thrown in) are fully one fifth of the church year. These Sundays cannot be consigned to chance or allowed to make do with the haphazard.

There is no reason why summer Sundays have to be second class. In fact, they can actually become models of good liturgy, celebrations that can set the pattern for the rest of the year rather than the other way around.

THE CASE FOR SIMPLE CELEBRATION

Let's be clear, there is nothing wrong with a simple form of celebration. The liturgical books themselves note that there are different degrees of solemnity, celebrations that are more or less involved. A weekday eucharist, for example, is not celebrated on the same scale as a Sunday celebration. But usually during the summer parishes fall back on a particular notion of simplicity inherited from the earlier days of congregational participation — the four-hymn syndrome, and omit the central liturgical chants. But there is a plan for simple celebrations that is at once liturgically acceptable and effectively convenient.

During the summer, and indeed for any simpler celebration, our focus should not be on hymns, secondary to the rites, but to those parts that are integral to them — the acclamations. The *Alleluia* is already omitted if it cannot be sung; in fact it demands song if it is to be a true acclamation. The same is true for all acclamations. Rather than merely reciting the *Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation* and *Great Amen*, we need to understand that singing them is fundamental. Add the psalm refrain, *Lamb of God* and communion refrain, and you have the substructure of any good liturgy, not just a simpler form of celebration acceptable for the summer.

A song during the preparation of the gifts and a recessional are marginal at best; these are occasions for instrumentals or silence, not by default, but by choice. The entrance song is structurally important as a beginning point, but it can —and should— have the character of a gathering chant instead of supporting a procession with very few ministers.

Sing the Glory to God in a setting the whole congregation knows can function as the gathering song for the entrance rite. You might consider *Catholic Book of Worship III (CBW III)* #238 (New) Good Shepherd Mass, #242 New Plainsong Mass or another simple setting your community knows well.

There is further incentive for focusing on the basic acclamations. They need not —in fact, they should not— be changed for the entire summer period. (Actually these chants should remain constant throughout the year. A congregation needs no more than one or two settings so that these chants can truly become acclamations that people sing by memory; this music should be second nature to the assembly.)

The weekly psalm refrain can be replaced by one of the seasonal refrains. It can be used for a month or even for the whole summer, with only the verses (spoken if necessary) changing. Consider: Ps 122 (#114), Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord; Ps 19 (#51), Lord, you have the words of everlasting life or #188, The precepts of the Lord give joy to the heart; Ps 27 (#118), The Lord is my light and my salvation; Ps 63 (#175 or 147), My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord, my God; Ps 95 (#122 or 50), O that today you would listen to his voice! Harden not your hearts; Ps 100 (#99), We are his people, the flock of the Lord; Ps 130 (#140), With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption; Ps 145 (#151), I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God or #204, I will bless your name for ever, O God my king. In fact, the entire responsorial psalm can be proclaimed in one of the seasonal settings suitable for Ordinary Time.

ESSENTIAL: STRONG CANTOR, LEADER OF SONG

This form of celebration needs only a cantor (leader of song) and an instrumental musician. If the main chants are constant for the entire season, even an instrument player can double as cantor. When the congregation knows the music well, little more leadership will be needed than that provided by the instrument in good hands. Further, since the acclamations are simple and short, even singing them without accompaniment sounds less barren than verse after verse of a hymn. (After all, how often is an orchestra available for “Happy Birthday”?)

On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are to refrain from engaging in work or activities that hinder the worship owed to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s Day, the performance of the works of mercy, and the appropriate relaxation of mind and body. Family needs or important social service can legitimately excuse from the obligation of Sunday rest. The faithful should see to it that legitimate excuses do not lead to habits prejudicial to religion, family life and health.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2185.)

Those Christians who have leisure should be mindful of their brethren who have the same needs and the same rights, yet cannot rest from work because of poverty and misery. Sunday is traditionally consecrated by Christian piety to good works and humble service of the sick, the infirm and the elderly. Christians will also sanctify Sunday by devoting time and care to their families and relatives, often difficult to do on other days of the week. Sunday is a time for reflection, silence, cultivation of the mind and meditation which furthers the growth of the Christian interior life.
(Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2186)

WHAT ABOUT HYMNS?

This does not mean that there is no place for hymns, but here again there is no need to change them every Sunday. Hymns, particularly during Ordinary Time, are meant to reinforce the Sunday and the action; they do not form a thematic background for the readings, even if one could be detected. So, one entrance song (per month) can suffice. The same is true for the communion song; here a psalm, perhaps in one of the more detailed settings (rather than the simple chanting style of the responsorial psalm) is suggested: #522, Blest Are They; #610 Taste and See; #611, Take and # Eat, #13D, Your love is finer than life.

Effective use of the cantor, who provides the verses, is essential in simpler liturgies.

What hymns might you pick? Songs that set a mood of celebration, that reflect the time of day (morning or evening), that speak of the sense of Sunday. These songs should be chosen and charted out for the season well in advance, in May or June, and be available for the summer musicians. (This is especially helpful to a visiting organist or fill-in cantor who will wonder what songs this particular congregation knows.)

Evening

#661 Day is Done

#666 Now Fades All Earthly Splendour

Morning

#650 This Day God Gives Me

#651 Morning Has Broken

Sunday

#590 On This Day, The First of Days

#592 This Is the Day the Lord Had Made

General

#587 Gather Us In

You might also want to make a list of the different tunes your community knows for which *CBW III* provides a variety of texts. This will enable your community to sing several texts to familiar tunes, and offers additional planning flexibility.

All at once, the “What are we supposed to sing?” scramble gives way to a feeling of confident order. (This list, of course, is not exhaustive. It should be tailored to fit each parish’s repertoire.)

Will this approach result in boredom? Actually not! In my experience, most congregations complain that music changes too often to suit them: musicians might get bored, but continuity helps congregations.

SIMPLICITY AND HARMONY

Sunday celebrations during the summer need not be scenes of pre-eucharist panic. They can be a time of simplicity and harmony, a time for teaching the community just what is essential to good liturgical celebration — for the entire year.

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