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DePaul University
College of Education

Music in the Liturgy: An Education-Focused Approach

A Dissertation in Education
with a Concentration in Curriculum Studies

by

Robert M. Beatty

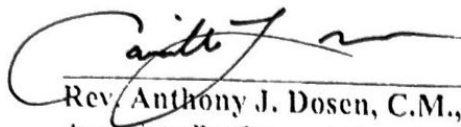
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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2023

We approve the dissertation of Robert M. Beatty.

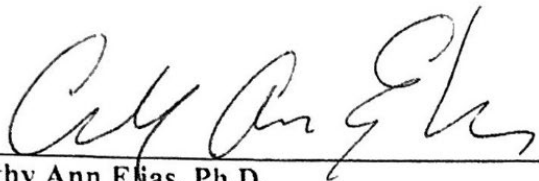


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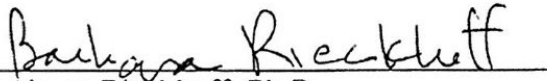
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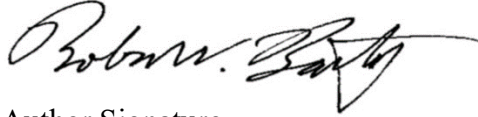
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Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation. Any assistance in preparing this dissertation has been acknowledged and disclosed. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas, and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased, have been cited. I certify that I have prepared this dissertation according to program guidelines as directed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Barty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Author Signature

May 30, 2023

Date

Abstract

This project examines how people engage with music in the Latin Rite Roman Catholic Liturgy. Despite ongoing debates in the field of liturgical music regarding musical style, music may express theological concepts, explore critical historical developments, reflect different cultural influences, and challenge commonly held beliefs. This inquiry explores these dynamics from the standpoints of educational theory and theology by examining the process of 'doing' and 'receiving' music in the liturgy. The site for this study was St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Chicago, whose current curriculum-based, liturgical music program developed over the last twenty-five years. Qualitative, case-study research methods, personal interviews, field observations, historical monographs, and other artifacts were used in the data collection process for interpretive inquiry. The people who reflected on their experiences as music ministers for this project provided a critical glimpse of how the subjective experience is transformative. These findings support the use of a learner-focused model, which necessitates the role of the music director becoming that of an educator to move and guide ministers and the assembly through the formation process.

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Abbreviations

The following table describes abbreviations and acronyms, citing the page on which each is first defined or used.

| Abbreviation | Meaning | Page |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| CAT | Catechism of the Catholic Church (2 nd ed.) | 10 |
| CSL | Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: <i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i> (1963) | 1 |
| ES | <i>Ecclesiam suam</i> (1964) | 4 |
| LG | <i>Lumen gentium</i> (1964) | 8 |

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I am also grateful to my research assistant, Suzanne Hannau, for her collegial support, inspiring energy, and professionalism. In this regard, I also wish to thank my colleagues at the parish and the broader field of church music for their encouragement and friendship throughout this journey.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge my family for their unconditional love and support. And lastly, I wish to recognize my faithful canine companion, Ru-Paw, whose affection has been an indispensable source of joy.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to my family, mentors, and friends with love and gratitude for their support and encouragement, particularly my parents, who were both born into eternal life during this project.

Chapter I: Introduction

The Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s mandated the full, active, and conscious participation of worshippers celebrating the Latin Rite¹ Liturgy. This new requirement was a radical departure from the church's history, where simply attending a celebration of the liturgy was sufficient. A broad and contentious division ensued among practitioners of sacred music. The style of liturgical music became and remained polarized between traditional and contemporary² adherents, with every imaginable variant between them. However, across the field of sacred music, theologians, liturgists, clergy, and others who influence the use of music in the liturgy have at least a few common interests. They generally desire music to uplift, inform, and positively influence faith development.

Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), promulgated by the Second Vatican Council in 1963, is the primary document that governs the norms for liturgical renewal. The chief objective at the heart of the reform centers on participation by the laity. Music is a critical element intrinsically incorporated in this reform. In 1967 the instruction, *Musicam sacram*, was issued to sit within the framework of CSL to explicate the specific musical norms. While these primary documents are reasonably clear and objectively straightforward, tensions arise when applying subjective interpretations. This paper will carefully consider the differences between objective and subjective interpretations and reflect upon how this unavoidable dynamic is at play.

A familiar axiom is that music is subservient to the liturgy; it must be obedient and compliant with the established universal norms. However, *how* music serves the liturgy is a subjective inquiry that poses a problem of immeasurable difficulty. One minister might be inclined to be a guardian of sacred tradition³ insistent on preserving historical continuity. In

contrast, a different minister might contend that people know what they like and what feels good indicates the right approach. Opposing viewpoints create inherent tension, yet there is a benefit to be found in the conflict. Advocates of conflicting ideologies must articulate and substantiate their genuine beliefs. We initiate a growth process when we ask why we believe what we believe. This growth, in turn, can be an influential factor in the formation and evolution of one's convictions.

Central Question and Objectives

This project will assert that a curriculum, or an education-focused approach, to music ministry is equally, if not more effective, than adherence to a traditional or contemporary style. It will interrogate how we engage with music at the center of conflicting ideologies. While music is always subservient to the liturgy, it also often expresses theological concepts, explores critical historical developments, exhibits different cultural influences, and probes commonly held beliefs. It is fair to say that music can and does function on multiple levels simultaneously. Therefore, the central point of this inquiry is not only what types or styles of music are appropriate for liturgy but also the method of *how* music is presented and received.

However, this inquiry aims not to debate musical style or make a case for one subjective interpretation versus another. Instead, it is to call out, name, and elevate the power of education in the process of 'doing' music in the liturgy. This study will interrogate how music might operate on a level that opens people's spirituality by finding a greater reality of who God is. With theology, educating in music allows another context for encountering God. The purpose is to build a deeper relationship with God. When we are focused on exploring, expanding, discovering, experiencing, and engaging old material in new ways and new material that begs

further questions, we may experience liberation from the untested assumptions of what we believe.

In the secular world, the development of a formal process for critical inquiry has proven helpful in advancing entire fields of knowledge. One such example, the evidence-based research process, transformed areas of investigation. Analogous to church music on many levels, the field of education employs well-designed research studies on an endless number of factors that influence learning and understanding.

However, correlational and descriptive research into an experience or phenomenon can have benefits and pitfalls. For example, some believe it is impossible to test learning theories in randomized tests because individual dispositions influence outcomes. Furthermore, it is not always feasible to generate uniform treatments in education because goals, intentions, and receptivity are not uniformly controllable. Despite potential biases, however, the quality of the design and execution of research, when combined with an independent review process, are generally regarded as means to ensure the integrity of the outcome. Breakthroughs on the level of a vaccine for coronavirus are not the expectation or the purpose of such studies. Small, incremental advances from controlled observations using multiple variables over many years are needed to move a field of study from theoretical discourse in an irreversible, progressive direction.

Emphasizing the desire to unite all voices in song, the church in the modern age opened her doors to critical thinking, reasoning, and dialogue to raise the level of understanding and consciousness. This paper will demonstrate that for music in the liturgy, this assertion converges where the experience of the quality of performance, reception, and reflection meets the critical

application of theology. This intersection is where the non-rational, inexpressible aspects of beauty and the Holy Spirit become expressed, rationalized, shared, and understood.

The church acknowledges the rapidly increasing changes in the world resulting from science and technology. Similarly, in the encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*, the church recognizes critical consciousness as the highest expression of modern culture; "...the investigation of one's conscious knowledge may well lead to a greater knowledge of oneself, one's dignity as a human being, one's intellectual powers and practical ability." (para. 28) Those who influence the use of music in the liturgy have a great responsibility when asking questions. Practitioners of sacred music must always be mindful that they are both learners and teachers by their engagement with critical questions: Is the quality of the performance beautiful to allow a conduit to the Spirit? Is the reception of the music engaging the intellect as part of the overall experience? Is faith formation from theology, the continuum of history, the application of liturgy, the appreciation of musical form, and the development of artistic ability? Is there an opportunity for reflection and critical response? These sub-questions will help guide and elucidate the benefits of approaching music from an education-centered methodology.

Critical thinking in the form of experienced-based, peer-reviewed research has had a tremendous positive impact in parallel fields of inquiry. There is every reason to believe it would also benefit music and theology. This study will critically examine the lived experiences of a group of people who actively serve as ministers of liturgical music and their encounters with the phenomenon of Catholic liturgical music as they correspond and relate to scholarship across the fields of theology, liturgy, and music.

Researcher, Music Minister, and Venue

A note here about the researcher's relationship to the study explains how personal and professional identities intersect and how they may impact the research. I was born the week the Second Vatican Council closed in December of 1965, a product of the generation that had much to figure out concerning the newly promulgated CSL. While immersed in the folk music revival that reflected the social climate of that generation, I had limited exposure to traditional music in the church. Sparse encounters with chant, classical organ music, and polyphonic choral music sparked a curiosity that would take a lifetime to discover and explore. At a young age, I knew I wanted to devote a significant portion of my life to mastering the organ, which later gave way to my interest in the Latin Rite liturgy. I did my undergraduate studies at the Eastman School of Music. Subsequently, I moved to Chicago to work under Cardinal Bernardin's Senior Liturgical Advisor, Fr. Ronald Lewinski. During this time, I held the position of Assistant Organist at Holy Name Cathedral, where I worked under the tutelage of Richard Proulx. I completed my master's degree in organ performance at Northwestern University. I later became the Organist and Music Director at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Chicago, now in my 25th year. Because of my relationship and length of tenure, it is natural to look to St. Vincent de Paul Parish as the setting for this research.

St. Vincent is an urban parish of over 4,000 registered individuals on the DePaul University campus. Situated in the affluent neighborhood of Chicago's Lincoln Park, a significant population of young adults in their twenties and thirties represent more than half of the people attending Mass on a given weekend. The environment is youthful and energetic and emphasizes the Vincentian charism, which refers to the teachings of St. Vincent de Paul. St. Vincent embraced humble and grateful service to others, especially the poor ("Vincentian

charism," n.d.). However, an established conviction is that feeding the poor is not enough. Setting the table when we feed the poor is just as important. Accordingly, we aspire to set the table with beauty and reverence within the liturgy.

Musically, the parish has a long history of fine music-making with a historical program that set an institutional standard from the early twentieth century up to the close of the Second Vatican Council. Through its intimate association with DePaul University, a Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music⁴ flourished under reputable leaders in sacred music, including Dr. Arthur Becker, René Dosogne, and Jerome Butera. While Becker was an organist at St. Vincent, he helped establish the School of Music at DePaul University and was its first dean. As a result, the reputation of the music program burgeoned throughout the Midwest during his tenure.

In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, several decades passed while the universal church absorbed and assimilated the wealth of information that forever changed its future trajectory. Like most parishes across the world, St. Vincent de Paul struggled during this period to find its new voice and to make meaning of the new social and ecclesiastical order. Music in the liturgy was part of a reactionary movement that jettisoned the old in exchange for the new. But by the beginning of the twenty-first century, a more comprehensive music program developed that continually seeks to unite the guiding, fundamental principles of the 'old style' with the growing advances of the 'new order.'

Today's parish music program provides conventional musical styles in contemporary and traditional Roman Catholic worship. All people with pleasant singing voices and a desire to learn and grow in the faith are welcome. Both parish choirs sing at an advanced skill level, ranging in proficiency from beginner to professional musician side-by-side. Over the years, membership has reflected most of the mainstream Protestant denominations. Some of these non-Catholic

members have become Catholic after a lengthy time. It is also important to note that most members initially join the program because of their love of music and, over time, acquire a deeper understanding of their faith.

Our fundamental approach to music at St. Vincent requires pastoral and musical leadership to bring different and disparate parts together in harmony. People learn about their faith through music while finding a collective voice. Music in the liturgy is carefully considered because of its power to inform one in their faith. Building repertoire for a choir and an assembly requires balancing local tradition and familiarity. Likewise, to test the boundaries of appropriateness, it is sometimes necessary to go beyond them. Challenging advanced musicians and encouraging those who need more nurturing is an ongoing challenge. The relational aspect of group dynamics is also critical to fostering an environment of mutual respect and appreciation. These aspects are essential for a functional ministry that seeks to evangelize and form people at all stages of their faith journey.

Ministry as a Calling

A theological context is necessary when reflecting on a liturgical ministry of any sort. Hahnenberg (2014, p. x) asserts that any discernment about one's work to "proclaim, celebrate, and serve the reign of God" is a theological inquiry because it necessitates questions about the study of God. "Theology is simply the attempt to make sense of these experiences of 'something more.'" (p. xi)

Historical perspectives of mission and ministry generally emphasize the vocations of ordained clergy and religious brothers and sisters. The Second Vatican Council was revolutionary in advancing pervasive teaching that the laity, by Baptism and as part of the Body of Christ⁵, is also called to a particular (unique) vocation in the church. (2014, p. 15) *Lumen*

Gentium, a principle document produced by the Second Vatican Council, calls out the responsibility of the faithful: "Each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his or her ability." (para. 17)

Additionally, each disciple develops a sincere Christian ethos from the liturgy (*source*), to which all endeavors of the church are redirected (*summit*), compelling the faithful to participate fully in public worship. (CSL, para. 10 and 14) Emphasis on the liturgy cultivates a life steeped in Christian ideals. (Fahey, 2011, p. 347) The Holy Spirit imparts many gifts to all of God's people for building up the church. (p. 348) The church has a clear expectation for all of the Baptized to participate in the liturgy. There is also an expectation that they will grow their faith with the talents that God bestows.

A universal theology of vocation asserts that all members of the Body of Christ⁵ contribute to the greater good. Vocation, in this regard, is typically described as a *calling*. (2014, p. 4) For a musician, this may express itself through talents and a preference for mastering an instrument or singing. Whether a musician intends to devote her life to the study and practice of virtuoso organ playing or participate in a choir as a hobby, her investment of time and commitment to the development of musical skills, combined with the sharing of talents that she has carefully cultivated, is vocational in this context.

Calling emanates from the Holy Spirit, quietly at work, inspiring and encouraging a genuine interest. The Spirit may foster a burning desire for greatness or merely plant the seed of curiosity to explore and grow in appreciation. Relational vocation is a response that investigates and explores deep inclinations and reciprocally shares them in service to God and others. (2014, p. 4-5) When first responding to a calling, a person may not even be aware of the Holy Spirit at work. For instance, consider how often an individual enters the music ministry for self-

gratification. When reflecting on their experience over the years, they often see how their initial inspiration was a gift from the Holy Spirit. They respond by cultivating that interest, sharing it with others, and only then understanding how it became woven into the fabric of their faith through continual participation in the liturgy.

Hahnenberg posits at least three ways a calling operates in a person's life. The first speaks to our self-identity (*who*), the unique way we embody and live out the universal call to holiness. The second regards our state of life (*how*), whether ordained, consecrated⁶, or lay life. The third speaks to our ministry (*what*), the way we serve God and others. All three are essential. All three are intertwined. All three come together in the lives of those serving or seeking ways to serve the church as lay ministers. (p. 11) Vocational calling is universal and unique at the same time. Just as all the musicians of an orchestra play an instrument, every instrument contributes something exceptional and distinct.

People experience moments of significance when something at a deeper level of consciousness becomes apparent. Regarded as an 'epiphany' or a 'peak experience,' these moments indicate something greater at work beneath the surface. For instance, we often describe a masterwork like Mozart's Requiem as a spiritual experience. Mozart is inspired to compose the piece, the musician is inspired to perform it, and the audience is inspired as they encounter it. People of faith believe that this inspiration is God at work. The artist, poet, painter, and craftsman often find the inspiration they describe as spiritual—God acting through them. Hahnenberg asserts that from the Christian perspective, an experience of God is an experience of love: "God is the dynamic communion—the love—among Father, Son, and Spirit. Alternatively, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it so beautifully: 'God's very being is love.'" (2014, p. 39) A transformation begins when a person recognizes a peak experience rooted in love and

relates it to the Spirit at work. As the commitment to one's faith increases, it is "animated by the love of God and neighbor." (2005, p. 25)

My experience of conversion from musician to minister of music took place after several years of study at a conservatory and several more years of work as a professional organist. I was driven to learn and perform concert repertoire and had a keen parallel interest in the church's liturgy that stemmed from my early childhood. I remember as a young child the first moment that I was swept away by music in the church during the proclamation of the Easter Exsultet⁷. It was chanted so beautifully that I could enter into the mystery of the proclamation and contemplate so many questions that I would begin to explore for the rest of my life. Never before had I heard anything that drew me to such a level of sublime transcendence. I carried that experience with me through my studies as an organist.

A few years out of college, I did a summer residency as an organist with a men and boy choir from the United States at Wells Cathedral in England. One afternoon, a tourist came up to me and said, "For the past hour, my husband and I have been walking around this cathedral, and all I could do was ask 'why.' Why would generation after generation of poor peasant people give so much of their lives to build an edifice of stone and glass? I could not understand it. All I saw was stone and glass. Stone. And glass. But then your choir began to sing, and this room of stone and glass was filled with the most glorious sound, and suddenly, as I listened to those words, I understood. I now understand." And with that, the woman turned and departed. That one quiet, simple, and brief encounter changed the direction of my life because it was then that I, too, came to understand something that defied a description in words.

Reflecting on what we do and why we do what we do is fundamental to the spirituality of the lay minister. Hahnenberg uses the concept of mystagogy to help illuminate this idea.

Mystagogy is about investigating, probing, questioning, observing, and appraising all the various ways that an unseen God is present and active in our lives. “In the early church, mystagogy was a time of post-baptismal catechesis, an opportunity to unpack the “mysteries” (the rituals) that had been celebrated. The idea was that you could not really understand something until you had experienced it yourself.” (2014, p. 43)

A critical part of the liturgical music program at St. Vincent is reflecting on the historical context and diverse contemporary situations. For instance, the parish choirs have devoted entire seasons to studying Eastern Rite chant, Baroque music of the Bolivian Indian Missions, uses of liturgical jazz, gospel, and spirituals, and the music of colonial America, to name a few. In another season, we investigated Marian texts in numerous settings to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the Association of the Miraculous Medal⁸ in the United States. The music itself was one aspect. Coupling music with written articles every Sunday in the order of service and reflecting on our experience as ministers were also critical for building appreciation and shaping and directing people’s experiences. At the end of the study of the Marian repertoire, the choir invited parishioners on a tour of the Vincentian Western Province in Perryville, Missouri. They sang at the National Shrine of the Miraculous Medal, visited Vincentian sister parishes, and toured other related sites of interest. These programmatic activities were outside the praxis of the liturgy, but the liturgy remained the source and summit. Working beyond the liturgy's central scope helped us create relationships through our sharing, which raised the level of conscious and active participation in our worship.

Summary

As Saint Vincent de Paul Church looks to the near future with a renewed focus on evangelization, there is an expectation that all of her lay leaders will critically examine their

ministry from a relationship standpoint. This statement can, of course, apply to any number of viewpoints. Whether one contemplates a more lofty theological relationship among the persons of the Trinity or a humble relationship between an individual with Christ, we are all asked to reflect upon our relationship with God and the people we serve in God's name.

An essential point that Hahnenberg makes when describing relationships is the idea of receiving. Ministers, in general, all have so much they want to give. Still, in sharing time and talent, receiving is also an equally important aspect. "Solidarity, presence, mutuality—these are the marks of ministerial spirituality marked by mission understood in terms of relationship. We do not so much act on others as accompany them. We give, and we receive. We share together the good news of God's presence in the world." (p. 126)

The mutuality between giving and receiving underscores the relational aspect of how disciples are Christ for one another. Listening, being present, and solidarity are hallmarks of evangelization. These hallmarks may present a challenge for the liturgical musician, especially since music has such a highly performative aspect. Liturgical musicians spend much time preparing music for liturgy, focusing on proper choral technique and ensuring the texts are carefully related to the scriptures. We worry about balancing what 'feels' comfortable and what will engage the intellect. Our work is incomplete, though, if we do not take the time to reflect, stop, and listen.

Chapter II: Literature Review

"In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else..." (CSL, para. 14) With these words, Pope Paul VI promulgated the CSL, succinctly setting the tone for the liturgical reform that was to follow. (Whitehouse, 2008, p. 330) The guiding values of the reform were simplification, a return to the origins of the historically sung liturgy, and adaptation to the "traditions of the peoples." (2008, p. 335) To understand the meaning of these values, the theology of worship came under intense scrutiny in the decades after Vatican II. Music played a subordinate role in these conversations, although its contribution to the liturgy remained significant. Out of this undertaking, the primary concern regarding music focused on how music could facilitate the people's full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy. (2008, p. 337)

According to Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict), an accomplished pianist in his own right, the subject of music moved away from a historical perspective, which led to a 'confused and maligned reality' in contemporary liturgy. (Ratzinger, 1996) While this choice of words might seem forbidding, they convey the sharp divergence between two interpretations that have erupted into an ongoing dispute. Generally speaking, music ministers today have come to know these two styles of performance as *traditional* and *contemporary*.

When defined as belonging to or existing in the present, *contemporary* does not adequately convey the scope of music available in the liturgy after Vatican II. For instance, the Latin Rite now might incorporate church music of Colonial America, Negro spirituals, American folk music from the Appalachian shape-note tradition, music from the Orthodox and Eastern Rite traditions, and even the occasional Victorian anthem. These genres of church music unquestionably fall outside the parameters of traditional Latin chant and polyphony.

Furthermore, the contribution of modern composers like Arvo Pärt, Oliver Messiaen, and Benjamin Britten, to name a few, have become lost in the general context of *contemporary*.

The use of music in the Latin Rite liturgy continues to be a topic that engages a broad audience. While it is often a peripheral topic among theologians, it is even more subordinate to sociology, ecclesiology, and social justice concerns. (Whitehouse, 2008) The intersection between theology and music¹, however, is gaining significant attention as an emerging interdisciplinary field of inquiry. (Broadhead, 2012-2013) Not to discredit historical writings, Stoltzfus (2006) asserts that at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the rapid development of theological analysis of liturgical music occurred.

Critical reflection is necessary to understand how music is created, received, and offered as a gift to the Divine from which it originated. (Webster, 2013, p. 6) At its very essence, all the known universe is a manifestation of vibrational energy, even in a vacuum. From this premise, Webster asserts that sound is integral in all aspects of creation and, therefore, not inherently human. Like all of creation, it is made available by the grace of God, and "Its manipulation into music is to be understood as the work of stewards of creation rather than masters of invention." (2013, p. 4) From this premise, sound can be regarded as a gift from God, and humanity's stewardship in the ordering of sound carries theological weight.

Literature and Search Strategies

This review is intended for those who influence decisions regarding the use of music in the liturgy. Accordingly, it examines analogous theological and theoretical perspectives chosen for practical considerations. These considerations, however, do not imply an exhaustive representation of the current dialogue in the field. Instead, synthesizing these viewpoints helps

support an assertion for experience-based, peer-reviewed studies with the intent of systematically applying critical analysis to any relevant questions.

A search for comparative literature was performed using the WorldCat search engine with combined keywords "music," "theology," and "Catholic." A vast expanse of material resulted, spanning the *Summa theologica* of Thomas Aquinas from 1485 to today. Refining the same search within the American Theological Library Association's (ATLA) Religion Database using the earliest publication date of 1990, the result was approximately 160 works. ATLA's Catholic and Periodical Literature Index yielded 120 results using the same parameters. This search yielded literature primarily in the form of monographs and opinion pieces. Almost no experimentally designed, peer-reviewed, evidence-based research was found. Final selections for this paper were made based on the content of individual abstracts and by identifying recurrent bibliographical citations.

Theoretical Frameworks

The Nature of Music

Maximus' theory of opposites and his theory of motion provides a basis for understanding music's temporal and transformational realities. As discussed earlier, he brought together essential yet disparate aspects of sacred tradition by fusing them to create a unique and indispensable contribution to the Church. Maximus used this foundation to introduce a radical shift in conceptualizing the liturgy. He assigned primary emphasis to the tension between the intellectual and phenomenal modes of being, the world of thought, and the world of sense, intellect, and matter, subjective and objective (Balthasar, 2003). For Maximus, the point of convergence of opposites is the intersection where one encounters the Godhead. Maximus asserts

that the world finds a mutual indwelling of material and intellect through the balance of equal tension.

The second pole of opposites, multiplicity and unity, complete the axes of two great cosmic tensions for Maximus. Both identity and difference are required by existence in time and space. The self is wholly contained and defined by the boundaries that distinguish it from others. Maximus visualized the polarity between the universal and the particular as exerting equal force. The ontological synthesis of the universal and the particular creates an inextricable bond where identity and difference are dependent on the other for a created state of being.

For things existing in time, such as music, liturgy, and the human condition, it is normative to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Temporality becomes vital in the way Maximus theorizes the transition from the sphere of natural motion to that of fulfillment and rest. All created beings have a natural essence that undergoes a metamorphosis of awareness about their nature, which moves beyond the physical boundaries of self from a state of motion to a state of rest. The state of rest requires grace because just as a person cannot create him or herself, the self cannot achieve rest on its own; it can only adapt the direction of its being. Maximus' theoretical foundation of transformation and polarities clarifies the work of modern theorists of sacred music, such as Jeremy Begbie (Begbie, 2013), especially as they pertain to emerging theories of transformation theology.

Contrary to the general sentiment of today's liturgists, who maintain that liturgy is not a performance (in the sense of a play, concert, or other spectator events), Begbie (2013) emphasizes the performative aspect of music in the liturgy. Because music exists in time, it shares in the shaping of the temporality of the world. Music is experienced in the present moment, and our response is not merely an intellectual construct but also an experience or

practical engagement. That experience brings all the dimensions of our human form with substantial implications for social and cultural influences. For Begbie: "performed music integrated into theological research, teaching and communication bears inestimable benefits. In response to those who would see this leading inevitably to a slackening of intellectual rigor, I would suggest that potentially the effect is just the opposite: an intensification and refinement of intellectual life which can be far more responsible." (p. 280)

The Nature of Beauty

Rooted in Platonism, the transcendentals are considered the ultimate desires of humankind in its quest for perfection. Transcendentals are three properties of being that are found in both the fields of philosophy and theology. The philosophical disciplines of logic, ethics, and aesthetics correspond to the theological principles of truth, goodness, and beauty. The CAT teaches that humanity is created in the image and likeness of God, and the attributes of truth, goodness, and beauty mirror the infinite perfection of God.

Beauty, however, has not always been as readily embraced in theological discourse with the same legitimacy as truth and goodness. Hostile regard for beauty by theologians was witnessed particularly during the Age of Enlightenment when conventional wisdom embraced rational idealism. "The resulting rise of utilitarianism dismissed beauty as unnecessary, ineffective, and even suspect for approaching the vicissitudes of daily life. Pragmatic cultures came to regard aesthetics as unconnected to spirituality. Additionally, suspicion concerning the appreciation of beauty developed because of the alluring power of aesthetics to lead a person astray from Christian teleology." (Capps, 2016)

Richard Viladesau (2000) is a priest and scholar who is well known for his contributions to the field of theological aesthetics. He asserts that beauty is inherent in the heart and mind that

seeks to know God and that beauty in music directs the listener toward God because God is the ultimate beauty. At the same time, he articulates the necessity of aesthetic transformation to create an encounter with the Divine. Music engages the heart with emotion and the mind by associating meaning with these emotions. Therefore, as an emotional encounter, music leads to the revelation of God through contemplation of the experience of beauty.

Viladesau, however, moves beyond an individual's experience of beauty in relationship to God. If God is absolute beauty, then beauty is found in all of creation, even in what is "ugly, deformed and unworthy." (2000, p. 53) It is only in the final consummation of God's triumph over evil, sin, death, pain, and suffering that the meaning of beauty reaches its fullness. The religious experience, in its incompleteness, calls humanity to action as it moves in time toward this final vision. Accordingly, solidarity is not limited to an individual's relationship with God. Still, it includes each other, involving those whose lives lack beauty and those who came before in the continuum of history.

When considering beauty's role in the context of sacred tradition, it is again necessary to turn to objective and subjective modes of thinking. A subjective view of beauty implies that what a person experiences as beautiful may or may not be perceived as such by another. Many critical qualifying questions are considered, e.g., what is beauty; who defines it; how is it determined; when and in what circumstances are such considerations made; why would a person or group of people be the ones to make a critique; and so forth. When asking these qualifying questions about beauty, we say, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

Contrastingly, an objective model of reasoning would necessitate reframing that statement: "beauty is in the eye of the maker of the beholder," or to quote a popular song by Ray Stevens, "Everything is beautiful in its own way." With this line of reasoning, something that is

beautiful can only be received as beautiful, for beauty is its ontological nature. It would be entirely rational to contemplate a bloody, tortured, and disfigured body nailed to a cross and left to die as wholly repugnant. However, when reframed through the loving eyes of the Creator, it can be appreciated how something as gruesome as the crucifixion of Christ becomes a beautiful expression of love. It is appropriate, then, that theological discourse on beauty incorporates the notion of devout orientation in the context of sacred tradition encountered in the liturgy. With an understanding of the highly subjective nature of beauty, the CSL exhorts: "the Church has, with good reason, always reserved to herself the right to pass judgment upon the arts, deciding which of the works of artists are in accordance with faith, piety, and cherished traditional laws, and thereby fitted for sacred use."

So, what then constitutes an appropriate aesthetic for sacred use? The objective answer to this question is stated: "The Church has not adopted any particular style of art as her very own; she has admitted styles from every period according to the natural talents and circumstances of peoples, and the needs of the various rites." Over many hundreds of years and across an outwardly infinite span of cultures and customs, "The art of our own days, coming from every race and region, shall also be given free scope in the Church." The caveat here, of course, is that it must maintain 'holiness and reverence.' An entire section of the CSL regarding music is devoted to this topic.

The first paragraph in the CSL given to music establishes its value as a sacred, inseparable component of the liturgy. This meaning is ascertained through scripture, ecclesiastical tradition (stated explicitly in the CSL so as not to be confused with cultural traditions), and by the magisterium:

The musical tradition of the universal church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy. Holy Scripture, indeed, has bestowed praise upon sacred song, and the same may be said of the fathers of the church and of the Roman pontiffs who in recent times, led by St. Pius X, have explained more precisely the ministerial function supplied by sacred music in the service of the Lord.

This paragraph identifies three functions of music in the liturgy: it "adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites." In addition to these functions, the purpose of music is to convey "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful." Objectively, there is little room for doubt about the critical and inextricable place for music within the liturgical rites. Indeed, every aspect of divine revelation supports this statement, and the CSL reaffirms it.

Literature Review, Part I: A Multidisciplinary Synthesis

Heaney (2012) takes on a monumental task in *Music as Theology* by bridging the interdisciplinary worlds of fundamental theology and music. Notwithstanding, it is impossible to adequately acknowledge all of the contributions in these areas and bring them together into one methodology for research. However, the task that Heaney takes up is not one of proving God and growing people in faith. Instead, she seeks to understand how and when this is occurring. She considers the development of theological epistemology from Neoplatonic-Augustinian roots to Aristotelian-Thomist growth and apologetics, which aims to prove truth by reason. The conclusion is that theology has not yet done enough to address how people come to faith through the abstract, specifically how music mediates faith.

Epistemology

Heaney (2012) draws the core of her theory of epistemology from Bernard Lonergan. "We cannot jump to theories of the essence of things without apprehending them first" (1988, p. 149). For instance, Neurological studies demonstrate functional differences in the hemispheres of the human brain. The auditory complex is in the right hemisphere, and language is in the left. The right brain is associated more with emotion, while the left is with conceptual and logical processes. Both hemispheres represent different points of appreciation.

Since the publication of *Music as Theology*, studies further demonstrate how the brain conceptualizes thought into geometric shapes. Surprisingly, functional magnetic resonance imaging shows that the brain processes conceptual thinking the same way it conceptualizes physical space. This activity is related to the mind's ability to think in the abstract and move from one thought to an entirely different concept while maintaining absolute separation between other images. Science is currently studying how the brain spatially maps sound to a matrix using multiple parts of the brain for higher-order cognitive processing. (Rajagopalan, 2019) While crediting an understanding of music as an embodied experience, Heaney asks, is it correct to categorize the intellect with that which is spiritual while relegating emotion to pleasure? If so, what are the consequences of a God that becomes human?

Bernard Lonergan (1988) describes knowing as an intellectual consciousness or critical realism. (p. 208-232) Lonergan spent most of his life developing a method of inquiry for critical consciousness, which builds on fundamental philosophies of education. Lonergan's process of intellectual conversion locates art at the experience level of analysis. Art liberates our perception of reality and challenges what we think we know. Like Aristotle and Aquinas, Lonergan renounces extreme forms of empiricism that decide without a process and are based solely on

what can be seen or touched. Instead, critical consciousness requires recognition and understanding of the abstract working within. (Heaney, 2012, p. 153)

Paul Janz (2007, p. 328) advances this viewpoint with his concept of divine causality. Janz is a Canadian theologian, former rock musician, and Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology and Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King's College London. He distinguishes between causal comprehension, perceived through the senses, and logical understanding conceptualized or produced. According to Janz, the notion of conceptualization through rational comprehension was evident in the writings of Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas all the way through to Kant. With the development of Classical idealism and later philosophies of the 20th and 21st centuries, however, it was essentially forgotten or disregarded. Heaney, Janz, and Lonergan all concur: "attentiveness to the world of space and time and how we experience it, due to the very nature of revelation, which is and continues to be incarnational—at the very center of embodied life. And it is in our embodied life that we experience music." (Heaney, 2012, p. 163)

Lonergan (1988, p. 238-239) provides a pathway for the discernment of an event by outlining the process of logical comprehension. He describes the stages as empirical, understanding, reflection, and decision. The initial experience of an event with the outer senses is the basis of practical knowledge. One seeks to understand the experience by intellectualizing it to move beyond this. Then, through rationalization, the event is verified by reflection. Lastly, the individual makes a decision based on their perception of its value. Lonergan then maps this process to a theological method. The initial experience of music moves into the stage of understanding. In theology, this would be parallel to interpretation using systematics. The next rational phase in the progression invokes a judgment that draws upon history and doctrine in

theology. Finally, at the decision level in logical comprehension, theology would situate this as foundations and dialectics.⁵

Heaney contends that conversion is necessary for the logical comprehension of music to be theologically appropriated. (Heaney, 2012, p. 176) To develop the theme of aesthetic transformation, she uses several works, most notably those of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Balthasar was a Roman Catholic priest and theologian considered to be one of the most influential theologians of the 20th century. He was also an accomplished classical pianist and well-versed in music, though very few of his writings deal with music directly. He wrote seven volumes on beauty, laying the foundation for reestablishing aesthetics as a primary factor in modern theology.

Balthasar's concern is not art in and of itself but about art that is directed to faith. For Balthasar, God is the supreme beauty, and aesthetics not rooted in faith carry an inherent danger. Beauty, in theological terms, is only valued when it is inspired or derives its beauty from the Divine essence. Balthasar visualizes this as a holy luminosity that radiates from within and draws the beholder into itself. (O'Donnell, 1991, p. 21) In this manner, aesthetic beauty does not come from the outside but is a manifestation of God within. "The aesthetic experience of faith, therefore, is the light of grace capturing our attention and revealing the object to us, drawing us into the depths of God's beauty." (Heaney, 2012, p. 197)

However, the quality of Divine essence is not the only limitation that Balthasar identifies. As new musical forms develop throughout history, with the maturity of each new form, a new aspect of the Divine may reveal itself. Although musical forms continue to evolve and potentially reveal new aspects of the Divine, music can never surpass the Divine. It must always be subordinate. In the ongoing debate about whether or not music is a form of language,

Balthasar recognizes that music cannot direct emotional or logical cognition without creating associations with memory, thought, and other extra-musical sensations.

Semiology

Referential, conceptual understanding is typically associated with verbal communication. Music also employs this process while engaging with the body in the moment. Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, is considered to be the founder of 20th-century linguistics. Together with Charles Sanders Peirce, the men laid the foundation for the study of semiology, the study of how the human brain translates words into signs and symbols to create thought. There are two primary ways of describing the process of verbal communication. The first is that linguistic communication uses opposites, such as 'up is not down,' 'wide is not narrow,' and so forth. The second regards the use of phonemes or images created from verbal utterances, "which we connect with ideas or concepts in our brain in order to understand them." (Heaney, 2012, p. 121-122)

Accordingly, musical semiotics is not involved directly with sound but with the images that sound creates. While verbal language is referential and conceptual, rhythm and harmony interact with the body through movement and motion. Heaney uses Dutch musicologist, musical semiologist, and theologian, Willem Speelman, to develop her views on how music conveys meaning. Speelman describes motion as a fundamental dynamic of music. "Every note is oriented toward another one, be it in tonal relation or in timing. We do not grasp music by stopping to 'see' or 'think' it. We follow it, or are carried by it." (Heaney, 2012, p. 123) The critical distinction between music and verbal communication to be made clear is that music occurs in the moment. Sound comes from silence; when that vibration stops, it retreats into silence.

Regarding the relationship between words and music, Heaney poses a significant question regarding the dynamic between the two: "One may well seek words that seem to correspond to or "fit" with the music. Are they the only words possible? Probably not." (Heaney, 2012, p. 86) While this may be said about non-traditional music, it also applies to traditional polyphonic music. Anyone who has studied 16th-century counterpoint is familiar with applying text once the piece is already written. However, it is worth a short diversion here to mention how this idea contrasts starkly with plainchant.

Chant is unique for several reasons. One prominent differentiating characteristic of chant is that it lacks metrical rhythm. Likewise, it lacks vertical harmony. It is typically sung in unison or occasionally in organum in intervals of parallel octaves, fourths, and fifths. Perhaps not so obvious is the inseparable relationship between text and musical expression. Music and text form an intricate union that illuminates the reader through the ancient art of *Lectio Divina*. Reverend Scott Hayes, CJS, a member of the Canons Regular at St. John Cantius in Chicago, describes this as: "a slow, contemplative reading and praying of the Scriptures — which enables the Bible, the Word of God, to become a means of union with God." (Haynes, 2008) This practice is heightened when a body of people work together through their study, reflection, and singing. The Rule of St. Benedict⁶ describes the cultivation of plainchant singing as the contemplation of Scripture using the ear of the heart. Perhaps this is one of the reasons the CSL affords chant pride of place in the Latin Rite liturgy. Nonetheless, it is crucial to differentiate the relationship between text and music in plainchant because it is so unique.

It is a common practice in conventional conversation to discuss the text before considering the music. In academic discourse regarding the theological implications of music, however, Heaney asserts the importance of situating the discussion from the standpoint of music.

This becomes especially important when considering the multitude of genres in the post-Vatican II liturgy. When discussing the effectiveness or appropriateness of a given example of music, the analysis necessitates a focus on music before examining how music and text are brought together. (2012, p. 99)

Another assertion that extends beyond style or genre regards the experience of making music instead of listening to and receiving music. Making music is in keeping with theological implications regarding the transmission of faith. Music-making is also a way of considering how people come together, particularly in various cultural situations.

Hermeneutics

Bringing together various theories like beauty and how music is transmitted and received, along with the systematic quest of theology for truth, requires a method. The aforementioned theologian, Bernard Lonergan, defines the method as “a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results.” (Lonergan, 1990, p. 4) Heaney develops what she describes as a musical hermeneutical method for culture, history, and symbolic representations. Hermeneutics is typically applied to the exegesis of Scripture, though its application is much more comprehensive than exegesis, which focuses primarily on written text. Hermeneutics is a means of describing both verbal and nonverbal communication to foster understanding and to be understood.

Nattiez is concerned with a consistent dialogic method for analyzing the complex web of music in the liturgy. This analysis requires a reflection on semiotics and a type of language he calls *metalinguistics*. Nattiez uses the term *metalinguistics* to describe “language used to talk about language.” (Heaney, 2012, p. 73) The language being talked about, of course, is music. This term is problematic because music has marked characteristics that differentiate it from the

spoken word. Some would rightfully question whether music is language. Nevertheless, musical analysis necessitates discourse despite any implied limitations that the term metalinguistics may assume.

Natiez's framework using semiotics and metalinguistics, systematically investigates if and how music mediates faith. It assists in exploring the genre, style, textual language, and whether or not the music is recorded or performed live. Like Lonergan, Natiez seeks to identify a methodology for comparing, integrating, critiquing, and advancing further analysis and understanding toward progressive knowledge. (Heaney, 2012, p. 71) A criticism of many analytical methods is that they do not consider the subject from multiple angles. Such analysis lacks weight without a critical foundation. (2012, p. 78)

Three perspectives form the nucleus of Natiez's tripartition theory. Initially developed by semiologist Jean Molino and applied by Natiez to music, tripartition allows the researcher to assume three different viewpoints when examining a subject. In this study, tripartition applies to the perspective of the person conceiving the music, either a composer or an improviser. Secondly, it considers the act of music-making itself from the performer's standpoint. Furthermore, it considers how the music is perceived by the listener, whether the performer or the audience. Meaning in this context is broadened beyond the producer and the receiver. The event between reality and human apprehension includes displacement between the composer's intention and the listener's perception. (2012, p. 86) With a tripartition approach, infinite interpretations can be observed, creating a symbolic web with different levels of meaning.

Literature Review, Part II: Educational Theory Applied

Theoretical underpinnings drawn from multiple areas of study help evaluate music in the liturgy. In the first part of the literature review, we examined the nature of music in the present

when a sound occurs and the listener receives it. The interpretive process of making sense of these sounds begins at that moment. Western tonal music creates expectations using conventional compositional techniques like harmonic suspension and resolution. Theories involving epistemology, hermeneutics, and semiology aid discussions involving the reception and interpretation of music. Sacred tradition also plays a critical role in the interpretive process by situating music within a liturgical context. The transcendental nature of divinely gifted beauty mediates truth and goodness, as demonstrated using theological constructs. Beauty is received when something is divinely inhabited or inspired. Additionally, fully conscious engagement occurs through both internal and external participatory processes.

With a multidisciplinary approach to fundamental theories established, we turn to the mediation of faith through music in the liturgy. The purpose is not to prove the existence of God, justify a Catholic liturgical tradition, or solve raging debates about musical style. Instead, this examination looks at how faith is experienced and shaped through the lens of the liturgical musician using evidence-based educational techniques such as teaching, training, discussion, and research. This chapter establishes a foundation for applying evidence-based education methods to liturgical music in faith formation. While scholars' contributions to liturgy and music are enormous, this review highlights a representative selection to illustrate the landscape of the field as it currently appears.

Sourcing Liturgical Music Case Studies

The JSTOR digital library houses a wealth of relevant material in academic journals. At the time of writing, a broad search using *music education* and *spirituality* yielded 14,165 returns. Adding the keyword *liturgy* reduced the output considerably to 1,992. Applying the keywords *music director*, *research*, and *parish* further winnowed the full-text search to 316 results.

A second search using JSTOR with different keywords, *liturgical music*, *case studies*, and *Catholic* yielded minimally relevant content. In Project MUSE, a behavioral sciences and humanities research database, the keyword *liturgical music* produced over 700 entries. When applying *case studies* and *Catholic*, minimal content of any relevance resulted again.

A unique publication surfaced that merits attention: *Sourcebook for Research in Music* by Scott Allen, now in its third edition (Indiana University Press, 2015). This book provides a colossal index of bibliographies, catalogs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, journals, and periodicals. Additionally, it covers music therapy, theory, ethnomusicology, musicology, and history. It also includes indexes for musicians, instruments, repertoire, and discographies. However, with only one out of 518 pages explicitly devoted to sacred music, a researcher of liturgical music will have to search for relevant content interspersed throughout its sections. A compendium of this sort expressly designed for the practitioner and researcher of liturgical music would be a worthwhile and significant contribution to the field.

A search was also conducted for dissertations and other empirical research projects on sacred music over the last ten years. Experimenting with various combinations of the previously noted keywords yielded over 400 results using the databases of the PROQUEST Education Collection and Music Periodicals. The surfaced content spanned a vast subject area, from *Metrical Interactions Between Body and Voice in Jewish and Greek Orthodox Liturgical Chant* to *The Embodied Ritual of Sacred Play*. However, empirical case-study research in the qualitative or quantitative analysis was not evident.

Nevertheless, case studies in liturgical music do exist despite not being readily sourced using traditional academic search engines. For instance, Mary E. McGann, Associate Professor of Liturgical Studies at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, has conducted

several ethnographies focusing on liturgy and spirituality. McGann's *Exploring Music as Worship and Theology: Research in Liturgical Practice* (The Liturgical Press, 2002) is a characteristic empirical research field study. It follows the conventional form of establishing a theoretical framework, including a literature review, case for research, research method, and integration of her research through ethnography.

Educational Theory

Empirical case study material on faith mediation through music in the Latin Rite tradition is limited. Thus, it may be beneficial to consider mediation and faith in the broader contexts of education and spirituality. As discussed in the previous section, the theory of polarities established by Maximus the Confessor situates reality in a three-dimensional world of time and space. Instead of approaching the human experience from a two-dimensional standpoint of right and wrong, good or bad, black or white, Maximus opens the continuum of expression to include an infinite spectrum between polarities. At what point does hot become cold, or dark become light? When does a sharp knife become dull, or does a piece of pleasant music become too discordant? Limitless subjective interpretations result, thus creating tension when views are not balanced. This inherent tension lies at the crux of educational theory.

In education, ideological warfare persists regarding the purpose of education, curriculum, and teaching methods. Similar lines of contention can be drawn in Church music today. An abundance of literature articulates and supports various competing ideological visions. The quality of this output varies considerably and spans the gamut of opinion pieces to professionally researched, historically informed, and peer-reviewed arguments. Applying educational theory and research in the domain of church music would not eliminate conflict but rather embrace it

with the intent of fostering a slow and programmatic process that develops and improves learning.

Numerous visions, ideologies, and philosophies contribute to educational theory. Schiro (2008) provides an overview of these by summarizing them into four broad categories. These thought paradigms act upon each other to define competing ideologies and force the exploration of new dimensions. Similar dynamics are at play in the field of liturgical music today. Schiro's educational models can illustrate these established norms of activity and their challenges.

The Scholar Academic Model

Schiro's *scholar academic* model assigns a hierarchy to those engaged in the learning process. Scholars are at the top of the pyramid, searching for truth handed down over the centuries in time-honored traditions. Teachers propagate accepted truth to learners who assimilate truth by gaining proficiency in the discipline. From the standpoint of societal influences, this approach requires enculturation into accumulated knowledge and customs. The primary concern for the *scholar academic* is to create a program that embodies the spirit of the discipline. An example of this ideology in sacred music might be the view that the chants of the Roman Gradual are divinely inspired, historically established as the music of the Church, and, therefore, should remain the exclusively sung prayer in the liturgy. In this regard, music is a sacred entity that defies interrogation. Adherents of this mode of thinking view the Second Vatican Council's outcomes as a developmental continuum with previous generations.

Several liturgical music journals, publishers, and contributors today follow the model of the *scholar academic*. One of the leading scholarly organizations of this model is The Church Music Association of America. CMAA is an affiliate of the Consociatio Internationalis Musicae Sacrae (CIMS), established by Pope Paul VI at the time of the Second Vatican Council. CMAA

is rooted in the tradition of its predecessor organizations: the Society of St. Cecelia (founded 1874) and the Society of St. Gregory (founded 1913). Among the most prominent scholars who have made significant contributions to the early establishment of CMAA are Archbishop Rembert Weakland (an alum of The Julliard School of Music), Theodore Marier, Noel Goemanne, and Roger Wagner.

The official publication of CMAA is *Sacred Music*, which, according to the organization, is the oldest "continuously published journal of music in North America. It is the essential resource for every Church musician, professional or amateur, who is interested in the restoration of the sacred in Catholic liturgical life." (<https://musicasacra.com/>) Academic search engines described above conspicuously source such contributors as the organization's president, Dr. William Mahrt, Associate Professor of Musicology and Early Music at Stanford University, Fr. Robert Skeris, Peter Phillips, Michael Lawrence, Kurt Poterack, Susan Treacy, Michael Procter, Kerry McCarthy, and many other experts and renowned scholars and journalists. In addition to the journal *Sacred Music*, CMAA operates three websites: musicasacra.com, chantcafe.com, and newliturgicalmovement.org. Within the pages of these independent sites, one will find a substantial repository of online resources that includes teaching aids, Church documents, textbooks, chant collections, and links to related sites and organizations.

By no means are these the only voices that reflect Shiro's description of the *scholar academic*. Even within a category of like-minded visionaries, some voices challenge traditional scholarship. For instance, a significant contributor to the development of the performance practice of Gregorian chant is the recently deceased Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB. Fr. Kelly's scholarship follows that of his mentor, Dom Eugene Cardine, OSB, of the French Abbey of St. Pierre de Solesmes. This line of interpretation seeks to recover the lost performance style

from a primarily forgotten oral tradition before the development of musical notation on staves with neumes (square notes). The Benedictine Abbey of St. Meinrad in Indiana preserves the legacy of Fr. Kelly today. This legacy includes his newly composed gradual chants in English, which follow the same principles of Medieval composition. Fr. Kelly's work is carried on today by Fr. Samuel Weber, OSB, Fr. Tobias Colgan, OSB, Ray Henderson, and others. It is impossible herewith to do justice to this scholarship's scope and importance, which would make it a fascinating topic for a dissertation.

The Social Reconstructionist Model

The *social reconstructionist* aims to remove unwanted cultural aspects and replace them with values believed to create maximum satisfaction with material, spiritual, or creative aspirations. This model assumes that social order (which includes the social order of the ecclesia) is in crisis, dysfunctional, and unhealthy. Because of this disarray, people, education, knowledge, and truth are scrutinized. To fix injustices of race, poverty, gender, and so forth, problems require resolution by reconstructing culture. In contrast to the *scholar academic*, the *social reconstructionist* would most likely view the work of the Second Vatican Council as a 'rupture' from the past, creating an opportunity to establish a new ecclesiastical order. A wholly separate and unique genre of worship music has resulted from this approach and aptly coined *Contemporary Catholic Liturgical Music*, a category complete with a standalone article on Wikipedia.

The *social reconstructionist* situates artistic expression as a cultural value inherited and learned by each generation as it evolves. Educational theorists use this concept to illustrate how some social classes retain impoverishment while others preserve dominance. French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, theorizes this concept, which he characterizes as *cultural capital*: "the general

cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed from one generation to the next." (MacLeod, 2008, p. 13) Bourdieu's assertions regarding *cultural capital* include differentiating upper-class and lower-class values, even converting hierarchical social values into 'gifts' and talents. Conceptualizing *cultural capital* helps to explain impressions of elitism, which dismiss classical tradition as 'highbrow' and inaccessible. This assessment understandably raises critical questions in light of music that facilitates full, conscious, and active participation by all.

Perhaps the one organization that has done more than any other to promote the voice of the *social reconstructionist* is the National Association of Pastoral Musicians. Now in its fourth decade, the mission of NPM is to "Foster the Art of Musical Liturgy." The mission of NPM, however, is not narrowly focused on one philosophical or ideological position. The organization welcomes and includes anyone who "promotes the full, conscious, and active participation of [its] assemblies, internally and externally, but especially through robust and prayerful song. [NPM] also provides training and formation for musicians and clergy in their important ministry of serving and leading communities in sung prayer." (<http://npm.org>)

NPM publishes two journals, *Pastoral Musician* and *The Liturgical Singer*. Among these journals' innumerable contributors, a few more prominent authors include Fr. Joseph Gelineau, John Ferguson, Jan Michael Joncas, Kathleen Hughes, Rory Cooney, Edward Foley, Kathleen Harmon, Ricky Manalo, and Virgil Funk. In addition, the NPM website links to many related associations and organizations, such as the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship, The Center for Liturgy at St. Louis University, The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, and the United Church of Christ Musicians Association. Unfortunately, the Church Music Association of America and its affiliates are conspicuously lacking.

The Social Efficiency Model

The primary focus of Schiro's third model of curricular ideology, *social efficiency*, is the relationship between society and commercial enterprise. In most educational circles, this paradigm situates education as the means of becoming a productive member of the workforce and community. *Social efficiency* seeks the cause-effect or action-reaction stimulus and response in modifying human behavior. Achievement lies in the functional competencies gained to perform necessary tasks and skills. Envisioning how this dynamic might apply to music in the liturgy is relatively straightforward. A direct, quick, and efficient method to develop an assembly that sings well is to introduce various pieces of music and test the response. The value assigned to the music corresponds directly to how easily people learn the part and enjoy singing it. If the court of popular opinion is favorable, the music is deemed suitable. If, however, the music is challenging, uncomfortable, or unconventional, the music is more likely to be relegated to the trash bin. An unfortunate outcome of this approach is often the lack of consideration given to artistic merit.

As anyone in the field knows, a powerful economic engine promotes countless new musical compositions every year, competing for market share and placement. One of the largest Catholic music publishers today is G.I.A. Publications, Inc. in Chicago. According to Dun & Bradstreet, GIA reported 2019 earnings of 10.56M, with approximately 50 employees. In addition to hymnals and music books, "it also produces and distributes music education materials (guides for teachers, college and professional texts, music aptitude tests) and releases music recordings and other related content on compact discs, cassettes, DVDs, and videotapes. In addition, the company publishes the *GIA Quarterly* magazine for pastoral musicians and produces events such as new music seminars." (<http://www.dnb.com>)

With 170 employees and a reported 2019 sales revenue of 29.99M, Oregon Catholic Press publishes liturgical music, books, choral collections, hymnals, missals, and support materials serving the universal and multicultural Church in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese. (<http://www.dnb.com>) On January 1, 2017, OCP and GIA announced a merger that includes joint ownership of onelicense.net, a website for licensing and reprinting materials. Participating publishers include OCP, GIA, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Hope Publishing, Concordia, Church Publishing, Oxford University Press, International Liturgy Publications, and many more. (<http://www.news.onelicense.net>)

In academic circles, there is often a tendency to regard commercialism with suspicion and disparagement. It is no secret that publishers must pay salaries, meet revenue goals, and remain profitable to stay in business. In the commercial space, profit is driven by what sells. Nevertheless, publishers like GIA and OCP significantly contribute to the field in many ways. They pump significant resources into developing and disseminating new materials and ideas. They promote the work of talented artists, teachers, and composers while responding to the needs and interests of consumers in a vast marketplace.

The Learner Centered Model

The last of the four education models that Schiro summarizes is *learner centered*. Instead of primarily emphasizing established tradition, developing new ideological theories, or being driven by popular opinion in a commercial market space, the learner-centered approach seeks to draw out of an individual's innate abilities as they explore new and different material. In this model, people learn from interacting with external stimuli, students, teachers, and concepts. The educator's job is to create environments conducive to this learning style.

The American Choral Director's Association is a non-profit organization of professional choral directors whose mission is to promote, among other things, education. Of great concern for ACDA is the choral director called to ministry as a leader of what is sacred, good, and beautiful. (Kroeker, 2016, p. 11) A further observation differentiates the formation of music directors and clergy: musicians study music, and clergy study theology. Each arrives at a parish prepared to speak different languages. In fact, in the United States today, only two programs in church music are dually certified to teach music and theology. (Kroeker, 2016, p. 12) When describing the work of the church music director, Kroecker asserts: "Working in the Church is different from any other job in music. It is not music performance, not music education, not music therapy, not music business, and yet a church musician uses all of these skills." (p. 11) It follows that a substantial and compelling case regards the role of the music director as one who not merely provides music for the liturgy. The music director has an obligation as an educator, transmitter of the faith, and influencer of souls. Although the medium is music, the implications for its use are extraordinary.

Like science, reading, mathematics, social studies, and other academic disciplines, music and the other arts require transmitting knowledge as part of a standard curriculum. When one acquires linguistic and cultural competence through their upbringing, children who read books, visit museums, attend concerts, and participate in other similar practices gain familiarity with the culture that the educational system implicitly requires for academic attainment. However, when catechesis and spiritual formation are precipitously lacking in an increasingly secularized society, the effect on the universal Church is enormous.

A recent dissertation by Josephine Mary Smith, Ph.D., from the University of Glasgow, focuses on the dependent relationship of education to liturgical development. She asserts that the

Church is obligated to guarantee the education of all the laity so that they may "fully understand what is being expressed theologically in the sacred rites." (Smith, 2013, p. 13) Additionally, she highlights the liturgical degradation that results from a lack of arts education by "reducing beauty to a modernist, secular aesthetic." (Smith, 2013, p. 335) Some of the arguments Smith posits to support her assumptions include:

- the globalization of non-Western musical cultures,
- the blurring of the distinction between secular music and sacred music,
- the impression of an elite dichotomy within the Church in response to the use of popular music in a liturgical setting, and
- the lack of cultivation and maintenance of necessary musical skills, which worshipping communities struggle to implement.

These problems are opportunities for formation in the context of Christian aesthetics with the challenge to reestablish excellence: "One of the constant challenges for the Church is to ensure that those who have responsibility for music in the liturgy are knowledgeable about more than music." Educating in this regard supports theological cohesion when making decisions about music in the liturgy. The overarching premise for Smith's research is that catechesis is necessary and appropriate in the liturgy.

Among its 18 interest sections, NPM hosts a division for those interested in *learner-centered* music education. By following the path: ([http://npm.org/other resources/more liturgical resources/other related documents](http://npm.org/other%20resources/more%20liturgical%20resources/other%20related%20documents)), one will find NPM's 2006 publication, *Catholic Connections to Music in the National Standards for Arts Education*. As stated in the publication's introduction, the "NPM Music Education Division has created this set of *Catholic Connections to the National Standards for Music* as a revision of NPM's *Catholic Perspectives* (1994). The

Catholic Connections endorses the *National Standards* and, at the same time, applies them to the child's faith formation through the knowledge of sacred music and its role within a worship experience."

Additionally, the introduction to *Catholic Connections* asserts: "If Catholic youth are to develop both as musicians and as active participants in the celebrations of the Church, they need a quality music education, a solid foundation in sacred/worship music, and a firm understanding of the structure and function of liturgy." Despite the seeming obscurity of *Catholic Connections*, its assertions are of vital significance. The *Catholic Connections* education guide includes sections for skills assessment, graded standards for singing and playing instruments, creating music, responding to music, understanding music, singing varied repertoire alone and with others, performing on instruments alone and with others, improvisation, composition, reading and notating music, listening, analyzing, describing and evaluating music, understanding music's relationship to the other arts, and understanding music's relationship to history and culture. To a researcher interested in how the implementation of these objectives is taking shape, however, one is hardpressed to find adequate descriptive material.

Research for Evidence-Based Learning

What seems to be conspicuously lacking in liturgical music are evidence-based papers that share the results and findings of the standards put forth by *Catholic Connections* as they play themselves out in our schools and churches. Case-study research is used in many fields, including music education, to compare established theories with real-life situations. A systematic and thorough approach to inquiry aids the growth of knowledge within a field of study. In addition, case-study research provides valuable calls to action by challenging the profession toward clarity across a divided landscape for the researcher and teacher alike.

The *Journal of Research in Music Education* (JRME) and the *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* (CRME) generally affirm that a *case study* is an industry-preferred qualitative research method. The study of liturgical music would benefit from incorporating established educational techniques and research methods currently used in music education. Some problems with this approach, however, deserve consideration. A study of case studies published in JRME and CRME examined the appropriateness of design and clarity of research. It also assessed the units of analysis and theoretical frameworks. (Conway, Pellegrino, & West, 2011) Using definitions of case-study format by Creswell, Merriam, Stake, and Yin for comparative purposes, the study looked at methods of sampling, depth of data sets, and description of analysis in the published reports. This study found that music education uses the term *case study* in numerous ways without a standard application or generally understood definition. A *case study* broadly refers to a model of research design as well as a method of music education.

In general, research should clarify the type of case study design it uses and identify and define the unit of study, including a theoretical framework, multiple sources for data (surveys, journals, observations), and a description of the analysis process. Although each of the articles from JRME and CRME used in the study made a valuable contribution to the field of research, the findings demonstrate a need for cohesion and a more thorough understanding of research methods across the field. These same assertions, of course, would naturally extend to case studies in liturgical music.

A Perspective on Faith and Spirituality

Apart from music, there is an inherent difficulty in the nature of discourse on religion, faith, spirituality, and the entity of the soul. Religion is usually defined concretely by a

corresponding institution, dogmas, and traditions. It presupposes a belief in a supernatural deity (or deities) that intervenes or guides the existence of life. Subsequent generations inherit cultures, traditions, worldviews, moral teaching, and the sacred arts through the institution of religion.

In spirituality, however, faith implies something broader than religion. Dewey (1934) describes faith as the unifying force of human imagination and the will that controls desires and choices. Palmer describes spirituality as something about the dimensions of human experience that "resides beyond the realm of easily detectable materiality." (Palmer, 1995, p. 92) For both educational philosophers, cooperative inquiry, observation, experimentation, and reflection are necessary to understand the mediation and transformative relationship between music and spirituality.

Associations in community and private connections are necessary for encountering the entity of the soul. St. Thomas More maintains that this process occurs through friendships and cultural affiliations such as shared meals, celebrations, conversations, and created memories. Most importantly, however, the soul is an intermediary entity between the unconscious and what is comprehended, "it is neither the mind or the body, but imagination," holding together "mind and body, ideas and life, spirituality and the world." (Moore, 1992, p. xi-xiv)

Some well-known music educators who subscribe to this mode of thinking include Iris Yob, Anthony Palmer, Nel Noddings, and Maxine Greene, to name a few. They all distinguish spirituality from religion, arguing that there are peak experiences in life beyond the limitations of descriptive words. These "existential insights" touch us deeply and profoundly in such a way that is "distinct from rational knowing, is not factual and indisputable, is not empirically established, is not subject to scientific experimentation or manipulation, cannot be established logically by

tracing from cause to effect, and is not even capable of full articulation in discursive language." (Yob, 2911, p. 43) Due to a lack of materiality, to understand the role of music as it mediates a spiritual encounter with the soul, the educator must initiate a conversation about the experience. This line of inquiry is a valuable research tool in elucidating how and to what degree music influences faith. Although these ineffable moments are not rational in the sense of being empirically quantifiable, they deserve intentional awareness because they help intuit humanity's fullness by incorporating spirituality. They are part of the universal human experience that leads to creating a form of knowledge. A primary assertion here is that "Religion has shaped and been shaped by the spiritual experience but does not have exclusive rights to spirituality and in fact must work diligently to prevent losing it." (Yob, 2911, p. 44)

Peak spiritual experiences are not mediated by religion but through the transcendental beauty found in relationships, nature, architecture, music, and other arts. Across the globe, many different ideas express transcendence: nirvana, enlightenment, peak experiences, and higher consciousness. These are all ways of portraying "a state of mind that is out of the ordinary, reaches beyond oneself, and achieves a momentary connection with a boundless existence." (Palmer, 2010, p. 160) Music often bridges the inner world of the self to an otherworldly experience. Still, it is an embodied experience that occurs in the imagination using the creative thinking processes.

Palmer asserts that transcendence is the key to overcoming the restrictions that are bound up in religion by culture:

"Religion is doctrinal and establishes a worldview that has its source in a codification of beliefs comprising a closed system. The practitioner, relying on learned religious exercises, remains embedded in patterns anchored in lived experience, that is, one's culture. Further, these

exercises are bound by cultural patterns usually ingrained from birth. Finally, any description of religion shows that it primarily relies on prayer and worship practices, and thus becomes specified in the language of the adherent, a language intricately reflecting the group's interpretation of their experiences in the world." (Palmer, 2010, p. 153)

Critical Religious Consciousness: A Case for Evidence-Based Research

Although the influence of culture cannot be ignored, spirituality is a level of cognizance that transcends cultural boundaries. It acts as a universal, unifying force. The church recognizes rationality and purpose as the highest expression of modern culture. Dialogue became a central element of the Second Vatican Council, and nearly an entire papal pronouncement was devoted to the topic. *Ecclesiam suam*, an encyclical identifying the church with the Body of Christ, expounds upon how the church is to engage in dialogue throughout the world; with whom that dialogue is to take place; how the church will respond to the problems that dialogue in the modern world will create; and how the church is to retain its authority and autonomy as an institution that is distinct and separate from the secular world. Through the rigorous discipline whereby one discovers objective truth, "...the investigation of one's conscious knowledge may well lead to a greater knowledge of oneself, one's dignity as a human being, one's intellectual powers, and practical ability." (ES, para. 28)

In the secular world, the development of a formal process for critical inquiry has proven effective in advancing entire fields of knowledge. One such example is the evidence-based research process, which transformed fields of investigation such as medicine, transportation, agriculture, and technology. (Slavin, 2002, p. 15) Likewise, the field of education employs well-designed research studies on many subjects that influence learning and understanding. Slavin

advocates randomized and matched methods and correlative and descriptive research in education.

This approach, however, can have both benefits and pitfalls. In a rebuttal to Slavin, Olson (2004) maintains that it is impossible to test learning theories in randomized tests because individual beliefs influence outcomes. Furthermore, he argues that generating uniform educational treatments is not feasible because goals, intentions, and receptivity are not controllable.

Despite potential biases, however, the quality of the design and execution of research projects, when combined with an independent review process, can ensure the integrity of the outcome. Breakthroughs on the level of the Salk vaccine for polio are not the expectation or the purpose of such studies. Small, incremental advances from studies using multiple variables over many years are needed to move a field of study from theoretical discourse in an irreversible, progressive direction. Slavin maintains that evidence-based research is the only way to stop "riding the pendulum" of trends in style, popularity, or fashion. (2002, p. 19)

Summary

A historical perspective of music in the liturgy illustrates the developments leading up to the reform of the Second Vatican Council, underscoring the desire for all ages to sing God's praise in worship. The Council did not intend to create a new church, dispense of a historical continuum, or divide its communion with unyielding ideologies.

Emphasizing the desire to unite all voices in song, the church in the modern age opened its doors to critical thinking, reasoning, and dialogue to raise the level of understanding and consciousness of all the Faithful. For music in the liturgy, this assertion converges where the experience of the quality of performance, reception, and reflection meet the critical application

of theology. This intersection is where the non-rational, inexpressible aspects of beauty and the Spirit at work in people's lives become expressed, rationalized, shared, and understood.

Appreciation for music in the liturgy requires transmitting knowledge that informs a deeper understanding of its application. The sharing of subject matter necessitates dialogue in the context of experience at the university level and at all levels of learning, including the local parish. Organizing educational models along Schiro's competing positions does not suggest that a particular approach is preferred or that others may be inferior. On the contrary, those who subscribe to a specific mode of education do so with great conviction and substantive reasons to support their objective. It is also true that most educators do not fit neatly within the confines of any one category or mode of thinking. Some of the modern era's most significant contributors are building bridges between staunch ideological adversaries. For instance, the recently deceased Leo Nestor, Columba Kelly, and Richard Proulx spent much of their careers inhabiting the uncomfortable zone between the academy and the reconstructionists. Finding resolution along this narrow border is where true educational transformation occurs.

Nonetheless, gaining a sympathetic perspective on opposing ideologies helps clarify one's conceptual framework. Deepening one's understanding of the range and substance of conflicting views prepares one to comprehend the nature of the argument and be more accepting of contradictory opinions. One can better contribute to that debate as one gains perspective on how dialogue is informed and shaped around a topic. Additionally, when one understands "the ideological pressures exerted by society and colleagues, this can help them put those pressures in perspective and minimize—as warranted—their influence." (Schiro, 2008, p. 3) In this way, competing ideologies provide a framework or lens to view the reality of the overall landscape. In

contrast, case-study research offers a method for growing the experiential knowledge base for a field of study.

Conclusion

A significant influencer of liberation theology, Paulo Freire (2007), taught dialogue is a uniquely human phenomenon that allows us not only to live in community with one another but to create the world in which we live (p. 87). Within dialogue, our words transform our existence in the world through the revolutionary interplay of action and reflection. When the balance between action and reflection becomes one-sided, the dialogue is ineffective—activism results when the word is active and void of reflection. Likewise, when the word is reflective and without action, the consequence is mere verbalism. Transformation within the human heart and throughout our world requires both forces to work together harmoniously, void of dominance and hostility (2007).

Freire believed that achieving a transformative quality of dialogue requires a commitment to love, humility, and faith in others. These values, in turn, create a harmonious relationship among those engaged in conversation resulting in trust. In addition to these values, transformative dialogue also requires critical thinking. "Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education." (Freire, 2007, p. 92)

Those who influence the use of music in the liturgy have a great responsibility when asking pastoral questions. Practitioners of liturgical music must always be mindful that they are learners and teachers by engaging in thoughtful reflection. Can music mediate faith? Is formation occurring from the standpoint of theology, the continuum of history, the context of the liturgy,

and the appreciation of musical form? Such questions are apprehended through reflection and critical response.

Implications and Suggestions for Research

As the intersection of music and theology continues to gain increased attention, experiential learning would greatly benefit. Critical thinking in the form of experienced-based, peer-reviewed research has had a tremendous positive impact in parallel fields of inquiry. Therefore, there is every reason to believe it would also benefit music and theology. However, the risk of not conducting unbiased, experiential research in this field is far too consequential. Without it, the ideological divide perpetuates in philosophical dogma, and the pendulum continues to shift with what is in vogue, driven by popularity in a commercially dominated enterprise.

To conduct research, the challenges presented by the restrictions of a weekly worship service require creative solutions. Working with choir members might be an excellent way to develop a curriculum at the beginning of the yearly season. Explore a topic and integrate content throughout the year, such as liturgical uses of jazz, the music of the Eastern Rite Liturgy, singing the Gregorian antiphons at communion, or folk hymnody from the Southern Harmony tradition. Plan the year in advance. Learn and perform the material. Ask questions, discuss, write out the responses, and share them.

Beyond the weekly Mass, there are also opportunities for exploring the process of fostering full, conscious, and active participation. Music can bring together musicians, scholars, parents, children, seekers of the faith, and believers offering praise. For instance, explore a topic in Scripture by having the pastor or a guest speaker talk about the Biblical implications. Children and adults can perform an excerpt from a related musical setting, or an artist might present

examples of the topic's historical portrayal in the visual arts. Of utmost importance, however, is taking the time for reflection. Dialogue and sharing within the local community regarding liturgy, music, and theology are essential.

Chapter III: Research Proposal

Research Design

This qualitative case study aims to ascertain and describe how a curriculum-based approach to administering a liturgical music program informs and influences the growth and appreciation of music ministers in liturgical music and faith. Qualitative research is ideal for this analysis because it examines individual subjects in particular situations, considering various roles, interactions, and group dynamics. (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012)

The setting for this project is exclusive to St. Vincent de Paul Parish. The music program at St. Vincent has used education-based methods to construct its music program for over twenty consecutive years.

Using methods of data collection and critical analysis for qualitative research as outlined by Ravitch and Carl (2016, p. 68), this study explores the phenomenon of Catholic liturgical music as it corresponds and relates to scholarship across the previously discussed fields of theology, liturgy, and music. More specifically, using the constructivist/interpretivist model described by Chilisa and Kawulich (2012), this study examines the nature of the music experience through personal interviews, field observations, historical monographs, and other artifacts. These resources provide the basis for data collection for interpretive inquiry. The classical understanding of constructivist epistemology posits the emergence of truth and knowledge through human experience. It is worth noting that this view stands in stark contrast to the scientific method of positivism based on empirical methods.

Research Question

This qualitative case study explores the experience of music ministers actively engaged in an education-based, liturgical music program. Furthermore, it examines the influence of this

approach on their faith and appreciation of music in the liturgy. As such, the following research question is the focus: What are the experiences of liturgical music ministers in an education-based liturgical music program?

Context of Study

Fifty years after the close of the Second Vatican Council, music in the church continues to be a polarizing topic. While much scholarly work supports both sides of the ideological divide, little exists in the way of systematic research into how individuals receive music in the liturgy and attribute it to the transformation of their faith.

This study asserts that triangulated, qualitative research methods are particularly well suited for examining and gaining a deeper understanding of this topic. Ultimately, such a study may contribute to the parallel field of theology and deepen our understanding of theories of transformation through liturgical music.

Measures for Ethical Protection

I sought Institutional Review Board approval from DePaul University before beginning the data collection process. Permission from St. Vincent de Paul Parish's pastor was also obtained. In addition, music ministers were provided informed consent. Finally, a signed consent form was kept on file for each participant in the study. Consent forms were used to confirm that participants understand and agree that their participation is voluntary, that they are consenting adults, and that no foreseeable risks or discomforts are anticipated because of observations or interviews. In addition, research subjects could opt out of questions they found uncomfortable.

Moreover, an unbiased research assistant, Suzanne Hannau, helped implement the interview process. Suzanne is a graduate of DePaul University's School of Music. She is a professional flutist, actress, cantor, and church music director of exceptional talent. For over ten

years, she has been the director of the contemporary music ensemble that leads music at the 5:00 p.m. liturgy. Suzanne has worked extensively in all aspects of the parish music program, and her leadership is invaluable. Her current focus is on the operational integration of the university's Catholic Campus Ministry within the current parish structure.

Although reasonable measures to ensure privacy were taken, confidentiality could not be guaranteed. Conventional practices were observed, including using aliases when referring individuals, keeping data secure and destroying it after completion, and asking participants not to share information outside of a focus group. Absolute confidentiality, however, could not be ensured given the close relationships that participants share and the possibility of disclosure by a focus group participant.

Role of the Researcher

One of the ways that researchers learn about their subjects is by observation as a participant in a shared activity. (2016, p. 174) I was a participant observer in this case study. I am the Organist and Music Director at St. Vincent de Paul Parish. For over 25 years, I have served the parish in this capacity. My professional music background comprises more than 35 years as an organist/music director. My work emphasizes bringing together volunteer and professional musicians in a liturgical music setting.

Selection of Participants

St. Vincent de Paul Parish is in Chicago's north side neighborhood of Lincoln Park. The parish and DePaul University are sponsored by the Congregation of the Mission, an organization of religious clergy established over 400 years ago by St. Vincent de Paul. The parish serves the DePaul University Catholic community in a predominantly affluent neighborhood. The parish

and university share the same Vincentian mission and values while being separately incorporated entities.

The participants in this study consist of at least seven choir members who join in weekly rehearsals and Sunday morning liturgies while the choir is in session (September through June). Participants range in musical proficiency from early beginners to seasoned professionals. They also have tenure within the choir ranging from their first year to 40 consecutive years or more. Choir members will participate in interviews based on their availability.

Members of the choir were not pressured to participate in the study. Although being in the choir qualifies subjects to participate in the research study, recruitment materials indicated that participation is voluntary and participants may leave the study at any time without consequence.

Data Collection and Analysis

A three-pronged approach for organizing, collecting, and interpreting data, as outlined, and presented in Ravich and Carl (2016), was used for data management for this project. First, informed consent was required from all participants before collecting data from interviews. Second, interviews facilitated data collection regarding participants' experiences as music ministers. Third, participants were selected according to their availability within the study period, and a preapproved set of open-ended questions guided the interview process. (See Appendix.)

Specific questions for creating a phenomenological research narrative address ideas such as: what does it mean to worship as a universal Church; what liturgical music and styles of liturgy have the individuals experienced throughout their life; how does music challenge, grow, and inform faith; how does music impact the experience of a community; and so forth. All these

questions were directed toward answering the principal research question: what are the experiences of liturgical music ministers in an education-based liturgical music program?

Additional methods of data collection were used for comparison against individual interviews. These included a focus group of members from both parish choir and a survey of members of the congregation. Selection for participants in the focus group used the same informed consent process in the individual interviews. Only the approach to gathering data differed by opening the questions for discussion and peer-to-peer sharing. Interviews and the focus group were audio recorded. If someone did not wish to be recorded for the interviews or focus group, the recording stopped, and handwritten notes were made.

Individual interviews were done first over two to three weeks. Once completed, the focus group was convened, and the survey to the congregation was administered concurrently via an online survey tool. Participation in the online survey was voluntary, and the responses were anonymous. Additional steps to ensure data privacy and confidentiality were not deemed necessary because the survey was blind, and no personally identifiable information was captured.

Typological analysis was embedded in the data collection process. It was used as the primary method for interpreting and reporting. Before data collection, expectations for emerging themes were identified. Then, once data collection began, I looked at high-level observations, questions that had not been thoroughly addressed, consideration of my bias as a researcher, and the development of emerging ideas for coding. Next, a coding memo was created using emerging themes with defined sub-categories and corresponding codes. Codes were then applied to the data for further analysis. The categories under consideration included descriptions of the experiences, perceptions, and effectiveness of education-based approaches to liturgical music.

This process helped determine the impact of teaching methods on the music minister and the liturgy and helped evaluate teaching practices and their importance.

Data collection through interviews, a focus group, and an electronic survey was conducted during the spring quarter. A research assistant aided in steering, transcribing, and interpreting interview recordings to help minimize bias. First, participants reviewed a transcript of their interview to ensure that it accurately reflects their feedback. Then, after several readings, thematic coding was developed and applied to construct the narrative.

Validity

Ravich and Carl assert that technical strategies alone do not guarantee rigorous, valid studies. Instead, strategies need to be “combined with systematic understandings throughout research design and analysis.” (2016, p. 194) Triangulation is an example of this approach. Many forms of triangulation can be effective. This study's *methodological triangulation* examined the patterns and convergence of data among personal interviews, a focus group, and a congregation survey. *Theoretical triangulation* drew upon the previously presented theories of music and beauty, systematic theology, and education. *Perspectival triangulation* relies upon diversity among participants' perspectives, which was directly related to tenure, level of musical proficiency, and musical preference (for example, what style of music did a participant prefer during leisure time).

There are additional strategies for reinforcing the validity of data collection and analysis. For example, interview subjects were asked for feedback, a process known as *member checking*. The questions asked included: do the transcripts accurately reflect what they wish to convey; what is being left out of the narrative; does the interpretation make sense; are there underlying assumptions that need to be challenged; and so forth. Additionally, my research associate had

over a decade of experience as a music minister, who was reliable and impartial to the biases I brought to the study.

Despite efforts to ensure validity and compile trustworthy data, every study has limitations. St. Vincent de Paul Parish does not represent every parish, nor does it have all the answers to the critical questions facing liturgical music. For example, faith formation in children plays a minor role at St. Vincent because the parish does not support a Catholic grade school. Furthermore, St. Vincent de Paul is in an urban setting where Catholic identity is strong and may dominate the cultural scene. The architecture, organ, and acoustic contribute to an ideal environment for community singing, which are luxuries that, unfortunately, are not particularly common in most areas.

Summary

By examining the dynamics of liturgical music through the lens of established education methods and case-study inquiry, this project sought to gain insight into music's functionality in informing and growing a person's faith. The field of liturgical music may find time-honored and reputable systematic approaches developed and used in education to be a significant benefit.

Chapter IV: Results

During the fall quarter of 2022, eight individuals participated in personal interviews and four in a focus group. These people represent a cross-section of the St. Vincent de Paul Chamber Chorale. Qualitative data was collected to examine the primary research question: what are the experiences of liturgical music ministers in a curriculum-based parish music program? The results were then related to the experience of the community as a whole. Three different techniques for data collection allowed a focus on the individual perspective, the group dynamics, and the impact on the assembly or congregation.

The chorale sings Sunday morning Mass and other principal parish liturgies throughout the year. Adults of all ages and with varying musical proficiency make up its membership. While the predominant religion of its members is Roman Catholic, other faith traditions are or have been represented, such as Judaism and mainstream Protestant denominations. It is also important to note that some members do not subscribe to a particular religion. Most members are volunteers, while paid section leaders provide support and leadership within their sections. Two of these section leaders also serve as cantors. The number of singers varies yearly, anywhere from 12 to 30 people.

The Chamber Chorale's approach to musical training and programming is curriculum based. Each season the group chooses a primary topic for a course of study for the upcoming season. Some of these topics have included Eastern Rite liturgical music, liturgical uses of jazz and gospel, shape-note hymnody of Colonial America, and Marian liturgical texts. Music for the season is then structured to include a course of study during weekly rehearsals for presentation in Sunday liturgies. A printed order of Mass includes educational notes about the music for the

assembly each week. Singers actively reflect on the material they encounter throughout the year, and an informed judgment and conclusion results.

Individual Interviews

Charlotte was the first interviewee. She has been a minister of music at St. Vincent de Paul since 1979 when she moved to the neighborhood after college. She was born and raised Catholic, baptized at a local parish, and went to another local Catholic grammar school and high school. Although she attended Mass regularly in college, she was not involved in ministry. Her experience in college of liturgical celebrations in the 1970s was relatively informal, often out on the school lawn and without singing. After graduating, she moved to the Lincoln Park neighborhood and has been active in multiple facets of parish life ever since.

Charlotte's musical background consisted of piano lessons for a year, but without a piano at home for practice, the nun at her grade school made her drop music lessons. In addition, she took voice lessons for six weeks. These few early piano and voice lessons are the extent of her formal musical training. She has depended on her church choir directors to shape her voice wherever she sings.

Regarding her faith formation, Charlotte attributes Fr. Barry Moriarty, C.M., a prior pastor at St. Vincent, as having the most influence. Aside from other less prominent faith influencers, music has been a guiding inspiration in her spiritual development. In addition to music, her work with a women's faith and service organization and her husband's journey to becoming Catholic have also been influential. When asked about how singing in the chorale enriches her life, she says it gives her an excellent opportunity to center herself. Singing is how she prays. Focusing on making music redirects her thinking. She feels happy when she sings, which positively affects everything else for her.

Bill's story is significantly different. At ten years of Charlotte's junior, his professional musical accomplishments are extensive. He started singing from the earliest days he can recall. His father was an amateur singer, and there was always music in his house. The stereo was always on, and it was always someone singing. His mother loved music though she was not a trained musician, nor did she sing or play a musical instrument. Bill was in the band all through high school. He was in musicals, marching band, and the choir. During his sophomore year in high school, he even gave up his daily lunch to be in both the band and the choir. Bill went to college to study business and remained active in the jazz band and the men's glee club. He was the only non-music major to take voice lessons and give a recital.

When Bill moved to Chicago right out of college, he did not sing for about a year and a half. He realized at this time how not singing impacted him negatively, so he returned to school at DePaul University to complete a second degree in vocal performance. Around this time, Bill started singing at Holy Name Cathedral as a volunteer, and now he sings professionally with many of the city's acclaimed ensembles decades later. The people who influenced Bill's musical development include a long list of prominent pedagogues and performers.

On the topic of spirituality, Bill describes his faith as agnostic. For him, Mozart is "as spiritual as it gets." Likewise, Palestrina is "vocal and spiritual therapy." In the early years of his formation, his mother was Jewish, and his father was Catholic. He was raised in both faiths, primarily Catholic, by attending church more than a synagogue. Christmas and Easter were celebrated with his father's side of the family, and Passover and Hanukkah with his mother's side. This upbringing for him was more cultural than religious. Bill can find a great sermon to be moving if the rabbi or priest has something impactful to say. Nevertheless, if Bill identifies anything as a spiritual experience, it usually comes from performing music.

Like Bill, Diane also has an extensive and noteworthy career as a professional musician. Her father was a professional organist who played in both jazz clubs and churches. At one point, her family had three pianos in the house, underscoring the importance of music. In addition, all the children in the family had formal piano training. She went to summer camp, and the counselors discovered she could sing. Accordingly, they made her the song leader. While attending a Catholic high school at a parish on Chicago's South Side, the school did not have a choral director, so she led the choir when she was a junior. She befriended a Latin School of Chicago teacher in her last year at Roosevelt University. He was filling a sabbatical there and became very influential in Diane's decision to become a music educator. He encouraged her to get her master's degree at Cincinnati Conservatory. Not surprisingly, for Diane, music and nurturing others through music became a statement about who she is.

The Catholic faith has played a central role in Diane's life. Her parents were Roman Catholics and attended Chicago's first African-American, Black Catholic Church. Diane believes she was probably more involved in the church because her father was a music minister. As a result, her religious formation was significant between Catholic school, church, and home. Her faith always felt like a "home spot when it came to where [she] wanted to be involved." Music provided comfort as a child; however, the transition from abandoning plainchant in the Latin Mass was traumatic and continues to resonate with her today. Diane describes her life as "continuously involved with music in the church. I have traveled elsewhere but always come back for some reason."

Diane's father was a professional organist who positively influenced her musical and religious upbringing. Cheryl's mother was also an organist, and her father strongly influenced her. Nevertheless, her story is drastically different. There was trouble with her father's mental

health from day one. He chose to get married so he would have a wife to take care of him. When his wife had problems with him, she would talk to her pastor; all he could do was tell her to pray. Cheryl recalls, “At that time, divorce? Even if mom were to do such a thing, she would lose the house. So, mom stayed married to him. She was an old-fashioned type.”

Cheryl’s father criticized her and her mother and sister constantly. He also could not be trusted to administer discipline because he could not control his anger. Cheryl said, “It was the three of us, my sister, mom, and myself, and we did the best we could. Mom worked so hard.” Throughout her traumatic upbringing, Cheryl learned how to express herself through music. Her mother bought her a small recorder with S&H Green Stamps, and she learned to play mostly by ear. Music gave her a means of self-expression when words were forbidden.

Her church did not provide a musical backdrop of any sort. So, when she attended Latin Mass in grade school, she let her mind wander. Moreover, she was a public school kid and could not join the children’s choir because they rehearsed when she attended religious education classes. Likewise, the parish did not impart a sense of caring about the Catholic families who could not afford to pay for their kids to go to Catholic school. Cheryl describes this early experience:

They had a kid’s Mass at 9:30 a.m., and nobody spoke. The nuns had these clickers, and if you misbehaved, you got clicked and called out during class. You had to have a hat to enter the church, or they made you put a piece of Kleenex on your head. I remember thinking that this is Catholicism. Then in 1964, Mass was in the vernacular, and I was excited because I could do something now. I was 11 years old when they started needing organists for the new style of Mass because people were singing hymns. So, my mother

volunteered to play [the organ at] Masses on Sundays. She was not a fan of playing in public, but she was determined to do it regardless.

She converted from Protestantism when she married my father. She was truly converted and a great example to me. I arranged the music and sat with her while she played and sang. We stopped going as a family because of my father. Mainly it was mom and me. They had priests who organized the music and were very good [musicians], but the music program quickly fell apart when they left.

Cheryl's musical experience in public grade school did not offer anything for children other than singing songs that seemed silly. She wanted to go to a specialized high school because they had an excellent music program, but unfortunately, they did not admit girls at the time. Besides Cheryl's mother, no one else played much of a mentor role in those formative years. Fortunately, the college experience was an exciting time for Cheryl. It allowed her to focus on music and develop her passion. She sang a lot of great Christian classics and had an excellent choir director that was very inspirational. Cheryl especially enjoyed watching the reactions of many other people who would sit and listen to them. Helping somebody else find a good experience through music made Cheryl feel better. Since her college experience, Cheryl has been a member of the Oak Park Recorder Society, where she specialized in early music. In addition, she served as a music minister for St. Hillary Parish in Oak Park and now reflects on over 20 years of service in the chorale at St. Vincent de Paul.

Another choir member, Lynn, has committed over 25 years of volunteer service singing in the chorale. Before that, she was a choir member at Holy Name Cathedral for 15 years. Her long tenure as a dedicated music minister and her Catholic faith are deeply connected. However, Lynn finds it difficult to be a Catholic in a secular society, particularly in a challenging political

climate. Her connections to church music and the church's cultural tradition are critical to cementing her faith. In addition, they help her contend with the historical atrocities of the Catholic Church over its 2,000-year history.

Nevertheless, Catholicism is the religion Lynn was born into, enriching her daily so that she can participate. Even in her extensive travels, Lynn and her husband attend sacred concerts. Music in the church provides a means for staying connected and enriching her faith.

The early formative years in Catholic grade school were problematic for Lynn. Like many of her peers, she had a difficult time with changes in the church. The religious priests and nuns at her parish school were reevaluating their commitment to their vows while the global church was assimilating rapid change. Lynn recounts, "I did not feel a good vibe until I got into high school with the Franciscans. The nun I had in high school who conducted our choir was perfect. She was very kind. That experience could be very intimidating for a first- or second-year student." Lynn attended public high school for her third and fourth years but continued her Catholic traditions. She even studied guitar privately. At home, Lynn's parents were not overtly religious. However, they attended church every Sunday and diligently raised Lynn in the Catholic faith.

Like Lynn, Joan's parents also raised her in the Catholic faith. Joan, however, became a minister of music after many years of being involved with parish outreach. She loved working as a volunteer in the sandwich kitchen. Here she befriended a bass from the choir who invited her to try out singing with the group. Her only prior musical experience was in a Catholic grammar school many decades ago. She attended Sunday morning Mass regularly at St. Vincent and thought the choir sounded lovely. Once she joined the chorale, she realized how serious everyone was about music and their ministry. It was a new experience for her. However, she found

everyone very welcoming and encouraging, and through her ministry with the group, she created lasting friendships.

Joan's dedication to the choir grew out of her longtime involvement as a parishioner. Her father and mother were born in Ireland, and Joan was born and baptized here. Catholic grade school and high school provided an excellent education. Joan recalls: "Mrs. Lawson was our choir director in grade school. She pulled me out to do a solo. It is very encouraging when somebody acknowledges that you have a little talent. My husband likes music, but he never sings. He had a bad experience in grammar school when they told him not to sing." Joan did not participate in the choral groups in high school, but she loved music and concerts and went to Ravinia, a renowned summer music festival with some of the world's finest performers.

While working full-time and taking out loans, Joan went to night school at DePaul University. She attended the school's socials and dances, where she met the man who would become her husband. He was going to Loyola University at the time. As to be expected, Joan raised her family in the Catholic faith. Today she enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and is a proud member of the parish choir.

Another choir member, Nikolaus, was raised in the Evangelical Lutheran tradition. However, his father was in the military, and the family did not attend church services regularly. Nik discovered his singing voice when he was in college. Friends of his heard his speaking voice and encouraged him to try out for the UCLA chorale and chamber group. He sang with them under the direction of the famed Roger Wagner while at the same time participating in musical comedy productions.

Nik pursued other interests apart from music throughout much of his life. However, in his early 70s, he met Lynn from the parish choir, whose story is shared above. Nik's relationship

with Lynn rekindled his interest in singing. When they married, it was a joyous and privileged time for the choir to sing for their wedding. Nik remains dedicated to the ministry and credits Lynn as his primary motivator. He describes himself as not very spiritually developed, although he finds singing with the choir enlightening because it affords him a new perspective on music and the church. When Nik travels, he and Lynn visit different churches and seek opportunities to hear various organs and choirs. For example, while visiting London recently, they had a unique opportunity to sing with a large choral ensemble in a master class with John Rutter, an internationally acclaimed church music composer and conductor.

The last of the interviewees for this project is Elizabeth. She is now in her 70s, a veteran singer with the choir having over 23 years of ministerial experience. Elizabeth describes her religious background:

I wasn't born Catholic. My upbringing was what they would call a traditional household. The religion I was brought up in was very male-oriented, and I never engaged with it. And so, it was many, many years after my children were grown that I decided to become Catholic. But I've always loved Jesus, and there has always been that yearning. So, even though he wasn't part of my religious upbringing, he was always spoken of highly as a teacher by my friends.

Perhaps the person who most profoundly influenced Elizabeth's journey to becoming a Catholic Christian was Sr. Marie Orff. Sr. Marie was a pastoral associate when Elizabeth was active in the parish outreach program. It did not matter to Sr. Marie that Elizabeth was not Catholic. Instead, Marie treated her with as much love as anyone else in her presence. Sr. Marie taught Elizabeth what it meant to be part of a community of faith and had a transformative influence on her.

Making music is a spiritual experience for Elizabeth. She has always wanted to sing in a church choir because music touches her soul. Likewise, she hopes that her music-making in the church will inspire others. Although she likes all genres of music, church music is different for her. She describes it as unlike anything else, and although it is challenging at times, she finds her work as a minister to be a wonderful learning experience.

None of the interviewees described their singing as a *calling* from the Holy Spirit or an obligation of disciples. The questions focused instead on the individual experience without baiting or directing answers along an ecclesiastic line of inquiry. For instance, one question asked how milestones in life illustrate how faith is transformed by music, while another asked for a reflection on how music in the liturgy functions for an individual. In this regard, it stands to reason that the line of questioning about ministry did not follow the viewpoints of Hahnenberg and LG, as discussed in the introduction. Likewise, comments were lacking about the obligation of the faithful to spread the faith as disciples.

Similarly, no one described their singing as a gift from the Holy Spirit. It may not be a surprise that no one discussed how their participation in the liturgy contributes to building up the Body of Christ. This observation is significant, considering most of these people have been singing in this choir for over two decades. They have engaged in numerous conversations about ministry, mission, liturgy, ecclesiology, theology, Scripture, and the like.

The questions and answers did not directly address the notion of ministry as a theological calling. However, most participants indirectly described these dynamics hidden beneath the surface. Diane gives the most direct answer when she defines herself as a music educator: “It’s who I am.” Many things contribute to her formation as a minister. Some of these include her upbringing in a Black Catholic community, being the daughter of a well-known jazz organist, her

development and growth as a music educator, and even her periodic search for a parish that inspires her. Her formation is unique because of her individual experience as an African American, growing up in a family where the Catholic Faith and music were both central, and because of her passion for music education.

Conversely, it is possible to view Diane's growth as a minister as universal. Again, to use Hahnenberg, her unique, embodied self-identity is bound up with her faith which helps define *who* she is as a laywoman. The lay aspect regards her state of life or *how* she appears in the world. The third aspect represents how she serves God using her musical talents that grew from her inspiration and dedication to her work as a musician and educator.

Another person, Elizabeth, contextualizes her singing in an overtly spiritual context: "I always wanted to sing in a choir, and this is that opportunity. Church music is different. It's a very spiritual experience with music. The music touches my soul, and hopefully, making music will touch other people's souls." Elizabeth clearly describes a process of reciprocity. She is experiencing some form of non-material benefit while at the same time expressing a desire for her actions to impart some form of non-material value to others.

While Elizabeth does not use deep theological language to describe her ministry as a calling, a theological lens is appropriate for understanding her response. As stated earlier in the introduction, a calling emanates from the Holy Spirit. It works quietly to inspire and encourage a genuine interest: "I always wanted to sing in a choir, and this is that opportunity." She contextualizes her experience singing in a choir when she states that church music is different. She then elaborates on her inclinations to describe the interchange she shares in service to God and others: "The music touches my soul, and hopefully making music will touch other people's souls. Being music ministers, we have to keep in mind that we are part of the message spoken at

that particular Mass. I always want to walk away feeling spiritually nourished, and I hope other people get that, too.”

Elizabeth also illustrates the idea of conversion, another aspect of ministry as a calling. As mentioned above, Elizabeth grew up practicing a non-Christian religion. She converted to the Catholic faith long after her children were grown. Music contributed to the transformation of her faith by putting her deeper in touch: “It’s one thing to go through conversion, but you have to become part of it. [Music ministry] made a huge difference in how I viewed religion, how I viewed people, and how I viewed being in a group. It changed my mind about some things and reinforced my mind about other things.” From a spiritual point of view, Elizabeth’s experience is significant because it brings subconscious ideas in her thought process to a higher level of conscious awareness.

In stark contrast to Elizabeth, Joan does not suggest that singing in the choir is a calling for her: “In everybody’s life, there can always end up being plenty of negatives. But music can transcend all that. It brings you back to joy. It makes you treat people better when you are joyous.” Her summation acknowledges transformation through a joyful music-making process and deserves further exploration. Joan has always identified as Catholic, as a singer, and as a part of a faith community. Similarly, Lynn, also brought up in the Catholic faith, offers a slightly different perspective:

I’m not sure if it’s transformed or a deepening of spirituality. When you are in your 70s and are lucky to have your health, you look at it differently. You look at what’s important and what you want to continue doing. Music has always been a part of that. It has deepened my appreciation of how I am involved in the community. It makes me not afraid to reveal my spirituality. Now I can see the totality of my life. That structure that

music contributed helps me go out every day and quietly be the Catholic Christian I want to be. It's something that I feel every day. Music helps center me and allows me to become that person and give that love and respect to others every day.

Although raised in the Catholic faith, Cheryl's experience is still quite different. The trauma in her childhood was undoubtedly an influence. However, living through that is not the sole driving force behind her musical aspirations. In addition to finding her voice through music, she has a strong interest in music history and theory: "Well-structured music makes me more receptive so that when I hear words, the thought process opens. It makes me more receptive to the text, how it ties in, and what the whole package means. For example, the Bach b-minor Mass—wow!" Cheryl is eager to recount her knowledge of great church music composers spanning the centuries. Her passion for music theory shines when she describes how music in the church evolved. It may be fair to say that the average choir member would not be so enthusiastic about discussing the hexachord system, how Michaud's work as a mathematician influenced his compositions, or what makes Gesulado so undeniably unique among his contemporaries! Nevertheless, her intellectual pursuit is part of her self-identity, part of Hahnenberg's *who*, an embodied part of her call to holiness. Cheryl is a strong catalyst within the choir to help unite intellect and emotion through music-making.

So far, the people presented have offered a look into how the notion of ministry as a calling influences them. First, each has a unique self-identity that finds expression in a universal call to holiness. Their identity is embodied and describes *who* they are. Secondly, each person is a member of the laity. *Laity* describes the state of their personhood or *how* they appear in the world from an ecclesiastic point of view. Finally, they all identify as members of the Body of Christ, contributing to the greater good. This aspect speaks to their ministry (*what*), the way they

serve God and others. Though not expressly stated, it is reasonable to conclude that their interest in being a music minister stems from inspiration from the Holy Spirit. Whether uniquely exhibited by becoming a professional music educator or experiencing joy to share with others, they have all pursued their curiosity about music in the liturgy and grown in their faith through their ministry.

Unlike the four examined above, Bill and Nik do not appear to be on a spiritual journey. However, they still perform their ministry exceptionally well. Bill is very quick to make clear that his interest in singing is a monetary transaction. He is one of a couple of leaders in the choir who receives a stipend to provide leadership with his advanced musical skills. Bill devotes his talents to helping volunteers sight read, match pitch, form their vowels uniformly, demonstrate clear cut-offs and phrasing, and employ all the techniques that contribute to good choral singing. He understands the job and delivers what is expected, and the volunteers around him benefit tremendously from what he offers them. All these attributes go with the friendships he has developed within the group over the years. He is considered part of the family that makes up the choir.

Singing regularly in the church helps Bill keep his voice in shape. He finds joy and fulfillment in the process of creating art. Bill also finds satisfaction in making music in a beautiful space with a generous acoustic. He is proud of his impressive list of associations with acclaimed conductors and ensembles and having sung works of the greatest composers on renowned stages. However, when asked about the different ways music functions in the liturgy for him, he responds, “it doesn’t.” In his interview, Bill makes it very clear that his three-decade, continuous span of service to the church has absolutely nothing to do with a calling or any

spiritual connection, for that matter. Instead, Bill views music in the church as fine art; that is where he is willing to draw the line.

A person who views church music as purely functional in the liturgy might dismiss Bill entirely. Working within a functional framework, one might posit that the music does not have value if the assembly cannot sing it. Likewise, the liturgy is for all members of the Body of Christ, not professional artists. Countless scholars have written numerous pages espousing this fundamental philosophy of church music in the modern age. While they present a compelling argument and make a strong case that a person like Bill does not belong in a liturgical choir, this determination may not be complete in viewing Bill's entire realm of possibility.

What Bill did not share in his interview may reveal more about the importance of art music to him. In private moments, Bill has shared how he lost his parents at a young age. When talking with him, it seems apparent that he feels slighted that his family is no longer with him though he does have a sister who remains relatively estranged. On big family holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter, Bill is always the first to volunteer to be the cantor at all the Masses. Sure, Bill is incredibly devoted to his work, but there may be an element of preferring to be with his community on those special days. Although Bill is a happy, kind, and dependable individual, it is worth considering if Bill might have emotional defenses in place that prevent him from further exploring spiritual pursuits. Music may be reaching him at this level and feeding him in ways that are not articulated.

Regardless, as a case study subject, Bill's story resonates with the topic of relational vocation discussed in the introduction:

Calling emanates from the Holy Spirit, quietly at work, inspiring and encouraging a genuine interest. The Spirit may foster a burning desire for greatness or merely plant the

seed of curiosity to explore and grow in appreciation. Relational vocation is a response that investigates and explores deep inclinations and reciprocally shares them in service to God and others. (2014, p. 4-5) When first responding to a calling, a person may not even be aware of the Holy Spirit at work.

While Bill does not espouse a religion or identify as a spiritual person, there is no question that the Holy Spirit may indeed be quietly at work. Consider what he has to say about how music has been a transformational force in his life: “Singing in the church is a privilege. I sometimes complain, but having that responsibility is a tremendous privilege. I’m a faith leader, and when I sing the psalm, I think of it like a storyteller. I have to communicate that message regardless of my personal beliefs. So I take that responsibility very seriously. I hope that what I convey takes people to where they spiritually want to be.”

Although Bill does not recognize any personal spirituality, God is arguably working through him. Furthermore, Bill’s actions demonstrate his love of the art of music and his passion for his work as a minister and the people with whom he interacts. Again, referring to the introduction here, transformation in a spiritual sense begins when a peak experience rooted in love is recognized as spiritual. In Bill's case, it might be reasonable to conclude that music is a catalyst that has prepared him for a peak spiritual experience. All that remains is for Bill to relate that experience to the Spirit at work within him. Just like Bill, the dynamic of Nik’s involvement presents itself similarly, though to a lesser degree. For now, Nik is content singing in the choir with his wife. He is learning about music and the liturgy as they relate to his background as a Lutheran.

Returning to the previous discourse on epistemology, positioning music in a theological context requires a conversion experience. Again, this derives from a peak experience recognized

and interpreted by the subject as spiritual. An association is made between one's logical apprehension of music and an encounter with the Divine. The intersection of music and theology can be examined through the experience, interpretation, reflection, and judgment processes. Constructing knowledge using this approach contrasts with a positivist approach, where apprehension is empirically tested through scientific methods. While the existence of God cannot be empirically proven, the reality of God can be deliberated by examining how God is or is not experienced. These experiences can be explored on an individual and a universal level.

For these reasons, the associations using music in a liturgical context are of paramount importance. First, music contributes to our faith through the aesthetic experience. It relies on non-musical sensations like thought, memory, and motor skills to influence emotional and logical processes. Take, for instance, Charlotte's response regarding music engaging the thought process: "We used music when we were kids to remember things. I can still sing the preposition song from when I was in third grade. It brings back memories. I also used music a lot when I was working as a speech therapist with kids and seniors." Charlotte takes the cognitive aspects of music and describes the effect on her: "Music is very calming for me. I can be in the foulest mood, and once I start singing, I realize things aren't so bad. When I am calm, my thought processes are working. I can focus on what I need to do. Singing focuses me." Charlotte says that music provides an orientation for prayer, and she prays through her singing.

Music in the liturgy creates an orientation for prayer through an aesthetic derived from non-musical associations like memory, calming and centering the thought process. Charlotte contends that music draws people in and makes the liturgy beautiful. Her work as a music minister gives meaning to her life by bringing together her prayer through singing, the creation and sharing of something that she deems beautiful, and the community aspect of being in a choir

coupled with a congregation of believers. As for describing the music itself, Charlotte says: “Oh my God, we sing so much music from different periods—all these pieces from different historical periods and studying them. I grew up with traditional hymns. Nothing fancy. My sense of music grew at St. Vincent, and I appreciate all kinds of music.”

Nattiez’s perspectives on musical semiology can be directly mapped to Charlotte’s experience. Charlotte is, of course, unaware of the theory of musical semiology, as presented earlier. However, she provides a tri-partitioned reflection that assumes various viewpoints on her engagement with liturgical music. First, her knowledge of different composers’ styles situates them in a historical context, giving her an appreciation of the music. She articulates her experience as a performer by describing how music centers her and creates memories and various thought processes. Finally, she critically considers music-making from the listener’s standpoint and makes judgments about how the music is received. In this case, she interprets the music within a web of meaning as having a musical and spiritual aesthetic expressed as something beautiful.

Not unlike Charlotte, Elizabeth describes a similar process:

I love all kinds of music, but church music is different. I hadn’t been exposed to anything like that before. It has been a very challenging and wonderful learning experience at the same time. I have to work very hard at learning [the notes], but also understanding [the piece]. We’re not just singing words. I give a lot of thought to the music that we do. What are we saying to people? What is it saying to me?

I have been moved to tears by some of the pieces we have done. It touches my soul. It gets into every fiber of me. It moves me. Emotionally I’m very engaged.

Emotionally it just hits me where I live. It’s hard to explain. Beautiful music will move

me to tears. The spiritual aspect of what we do affects our mind, heart, soul, and whole being.

Being music ministers, we have to keep in mind that we are part of the message that is being spoken. I always want to walk away feeling spiritually nourished, and I hope other people get that too.

Without citing specific musical examples, Elizabeth's experience as a music minister also is expressed in a tripartite semiological process. First, she describes the process of conceptualizing music, how she is affected when engaged in the music-making process, and how it is received (or hopefully received) by the listener.

Diane's reflection offers a different perspective of equal importance:

I had never been a part of a church in Chicago that wasn't all black until I went to Holy Name Cathedral. One of the other choir members came up to me and said it must be tough for me to be at Holy Name because there aren't many black people here, and there aren't many black people who are Catholic. So, I gave her a little history about the church where I grew up and the Black churches on the South Side. It just shocked me that she would have that perception.

If you are in a respectful community, appreciate music, and participate in the music, that's what matters as long as the music has some substance or quality. You will find that people's non-religious music preferences influence their religious music preferences. For example, my brother does gospel, and I do more traditional. There's a place for everybody, and it depends on the community.

The performative aspect of music in the liturgy is inseparable from conceptualizing liturgical music with a theological underpinning. Indeed, a point must be made that *performance*

is open to subjective interpretation. However, the purpose of this discussion is not to equate experience in the concert hall with the liturgy but to acknowledge the importance of the embodied music-making experience when it comes to worship.

Diane recounts observing the assembly: “Probably the times that I recognize the most are when people are singing their heart out, and they sound God-awful! And you know it happens! But it is so heartfelt. That’s a blessing. That’s what music does to people. It’s the way it enhances prayer and life all around. I always smile because they are singing it from the heart, and I’ll take that any day.” To Diane, the artistic quality of music-making, in this case, is not the issue. Yet, there is undeniable beauty in the expression of love.

Singing is an act of offering praise and thanksgiving to God. The most obvious example is the Glory to God (or *Gloria*) in the introductory rite of the Mass. The entire assembly stands to sing the angelic hymn of praise. There is no procession to go with the singing, no reading to reflect upon, no petitions to be made, and no consecration with responses to acclaim. The singing of the Gloria is one moment in the Mass where everyone stands and does nothing but sing praise to God. Music ministers can enhance the experience by dressing up the Gloria with choral parts. The choir can also reinforce and give confidence to the remainder of the assembly on their sung part. These multi-level performative aspects of singing the Gloria contribute to the overall expression of beauty through song. In the aggregate, many layers may contribute to the performance of this part of the Mass.

Likewise, beauty finds expression through different types of presentations or performances. Again, context and purpose are critical in this regard. From the standpoint of faith, beauty has Divine essence. The entire assembly standing to praise God in singing the Glory to

God is a powerful example. The heartfelt nature of expression is the very Divine essence that finds its voice in beauty.

There are also times when the choir alone may sing the Gloria while the assembly actively listens. In this case, the congregation participates in an *interior* process. Although Bill does not profess a spiritual connection with his singing, he is acutely aware of active participation on the listener's part. His interview describes different listening levels: "If I'm listening to something while I'm doing the dishes, it might be passive listening with one ear. But, on the other hand, sitting in a concert hall is much more engaging because I've made an investment." A similar observation may be made about the investment one makes in the liturgy.

Regardless of whether the Gloria is sung by the choir alone or with assembly, there is an expectation that everyone participates in the offering of praise and thanksgiving. The purpose of presenting this view is not to make a case for whether the choir or the assembly should sing the Gloria. Volumes are written on this topic, and deeply divided opinions remain. Nevertheless, both means of expression do co-exist in today's liturgy. The performative aspect that pervades requires active reception and cognition by everyone, regardless of who is or is not singing.

For this reason, when the choir alone sings at St. Vincent, an exceptional effort is made to convey beauty through the musical presentation. The approach is not to make great art but art directed to faith. Balthasar's "holy luminosity" embodies aesthetic beauty as part of the Divine indwelling of the spirit. It radiates from within to capture the active listener and draw them closer. This manner of expression requires a depth of understanding and skill that requires careful and loving cultivation.

Elizabeth reflects on the aspect of beauty from the standpoint of her ministry: "When you have a choir that is engaged and approaches the music as a ministry, and they are dedicated, and

they strive to make a piece not perfect, but almost perfect so that the message is there, the feeling is there. Super beautiful is when you are doing a piece and seeing people moved and inspired by it. I think we see that a lot.” First and foremost, Elizabeth frames her experience as a ministry. Her work as a musician to learn and perfect her art is framed and directed towards faith. When she talks about an engaged choir, she describes the determination of all the music ministers to learn about what they are singing and how it functions in a liturgical context. Elizabeth strives for perfection because she conceptually understands holy luminosity. Moreover, she understands the importance of perfecting the technical and mechanical aspects of music-making that allow the transformative power of beauty to find expression.

Likewise, Elizabeth describes what is conveyed through her singing as intellect and emotion bound together. She depicts the intellect as the ‘message,’ while the sentiment is the ‘feeling.’ These two forces work together to move and inspire the person receiving. Ironically, Elizabeth is also a receiver of what she describes as ‘super beautiful.’ “Super beautiful is when you are doing a piece, and you see people are moved and inspired by it.” Elizabeth experiences beauty reciprocally when she performs her ministry effectively. Her success is validated when others actively receive the intended message and feeling.

Lynn adds perspective on the communal aspect of beauty. She describes the dynamics of love at work in performance and reception: “...those experiences where everybody’s attention is so focused and engaged in listening. You feel that all these strangers come together and enjoy this experience. You can forget for a time the racial conflicts and the violence. If people could have this more, it would make society better. Music heals.” Lynn’s experience validates a simple yet powerful tautology: if music heals and healing is transformative, then music is transformative.

The responses from other interviewees help reinforce the theory on the nature of beauty and music. For Charlotte, beauty is “When it’s done well. When you have people that want to be there, when it reaches the congregation, we want them to leave feeling good, feeling God. I think music helps with that.”

Similarly, Joyce “looks for that one piece that blows you away, and you see people turn around and their reaction. That’s really special. At my son’s funeral Mass, the people were just amazed. I was so grateful, and I was so appreciative. It was lovely, and any day can be like that here.” For Joyce, presenting and receiving prepared music carefully is an act of transformative love: “In everybody’s life, there are plenty of negatives. But music can transcend all of that. It brings you back to joy. It makes you treat people better when you are joyous. It has a big influence on my life and faith.”

Summary of Individual Interviews

Charlotte, Bill, Nik, Diane, Lynn, Elizabeth, and Joyce offer different perspectives based on their personal experiences. All of these illuminate the theoretical underpinnings where music and theology converge. Theories of epistemology, hermeneutics, and semiology provide a language for examining the reception and interpretation of music. Sacred tradition also situates music within a liturgical context by creating associations with intellectual and emotional thought processes. For example, communicating a Divine essence can occur when transmitting and receiving something of beauty. In turn, the experience of beauty is an expression of love that can be transformational. Finally, conscious and active engagement occurs through internal and external participatory processes.

Focus Group Discussion

The previous review summarizes responses given by individuals in private interviews. This data collection method contrasts with engaging participants in a focus group. Using the same theoretical and methodological questions and opening them up for discussion among multiple participants created a different experience. The focus group members were all women of various ages with varying lengths of tenure. Ann has been with the choir for 26 years. She took time off while her children were in high school and college and is now back singing full-time. Jeanenne has been with the choir for 25 years and served the parish as a Eucharistic minister and a lector. Cheryl is in her late twenties and came to St. Vincent during the coronavirus pandemic to serve as a lead cantor. She now continues as a cantor with the added responsibility of serving as paid soprano section leader. The choir's youngest member is Megan, a student in her junior year at DePaul University and her second year with the parish choir.

The focus group answered the same methodological and theoretical questions as the individual interviewees. The purpose of comparing private conversations with a group discussion was to see how a group dynamic might enhance responses. As expected, the focus group was able to go much deeper into topics because of the inter dynamics of the group. As one person would offer a reflection, it would trigger a response from someone else, and so forth. This result fostered a more comprehensive discussion and created an evident and meaningful bond between participants. Several times during the conversation, someone would tell a personal story, and you could visibly see an emotional reaction in others. Reactions took the form of becoming animated, holding back tears, and laughing together quite a bit. After the focus group officially ended, the discussion focused on how uplifted everyone felt because of sharing. Through their sharing, the

individuals said they learned more about each other and developed a genuine affection beyond being ‘teammates’ in the soprano section.

Contrasting the individual interviews with the focus group, individual interviewees did not frame their ministry from the standpoint of a calling. However, the focus group had quite an in-depth discussion about this. Ann led the reflection in straightforward terms. She shared a powerful story about how she grew up in a family of eight children with Catholicism forced intensely upon them. The style of their participation in the faith was to go to church, do what they were told, and not ask questions. For a bright young woman heading off to college to pursue a career as a lawyer, she was pretty relieved to go off on her own and leave her Catholic faith in the past. Her issues, after all, were not with Christ but with the institutional church.

Soon after her college years and many early professional successes, she strongly desired to find a place where she could worship God and express her thankfulness for all the blessings she experienced. By this time, all her siblings had converted to other Christian faith traditions, and Ann expected to follow suit. So she went to several Protestant churches to see which one might feel the best to call her new spiritual home. One of her stops, however, happened to include St. Vincent de Paul. When she attended St. Vincent this first time, she recalled how the beauty of the music captivated her and drew her in. In addition, she met two young women, one singing and one at the piano, and felt an immediate connection. The pianist at that time happened to be a young novice entering religious life. Ann describes what transpired from this meeting as a calling:

God made it clear to me that this was where I was to worship. I thought, “NO! Not the Catholic Church!” But I returned to St. Vincent, and God told me, “I am so glad you are here because this is what I have planned for you.” There is a line in the movie *Chariots of*

Fire where Eric Liddell, a devout Scottish Christian who runs for the glory of God, is explaining to his wife why he must run. She said, "You are a minister! You should not be wasting your time running." And he responded, "Mary, I feel God's pleasure when I run." And that is what I felt every Sunday I came back to St. Vincent to worship. I felt God's pleasure. And I said to God, "Well, alright. I will come to St. Vincent to worship you, but I will NOT become a Catholic!" I said that to God! I would tell people I worship God *through* a Catholic Mass, but I am not Catholic. That's what I did. And it took me some years, and I finally said to God, "Ugh, you made me a Catholic!" I have my differences, and there are certain things that I will not buy into, but I have found a way back to the Catholic faith, and it is music that sets me on the path I am on.

Ann recalled how she was part-time in the choir for many years. She now recognizes the importance of coming back to the group full-time. Though Ann feels it is a great way to get her singing voice back in shape, she also believes God is asking her to put her voice back into his service. While it is hard for Ann to get to church on Sunday mornings, she is always glad to be there.

Not surprisingly, Ann's passionate and heartfelt recollection of how she was called back to Catholicism through music inspired others to share similar stories and frame them from the standpoint of a calling. For example, Jeanenne said, "Back in the 80s, I found church again after not going for ten years after college. It was the start of my getting involved when I got married here. I was once the cantor, lector, and communion minister at the same Mass. I had always heard a choir here, but it was so different when we started being exposed to the traditional choral repertoire."

Jeanenne and Cheryl shared similar stories about being relieved to go off to college and leave the Catholic faith behind. It was liberating because they could walk away from everything about the institution that troubled them. Yet, ironically, music is the hook that brought them back and deepened their faith.

Cheryl's account of growing up Catholic, turning away from the church, and finding her way back is quite powerful. When she learned about the cantor and section leader position at St. Vincent, she was very reluctant to apply because St. Vincent is a Roman Catholic Church. Her early experience was a very conservative brand of Catholicism which she found alienating. Growing up, all the Catholics she knew were intense and aggressive about their faith. She had no interest in returning to a Catholic Church, but she gave St. Vincent a try thinking it would be only a job for her.

After three months at St. Vincent, one of her early encounters with the parish was with a Vincentian priest who is a professor at the university. Though she does not recall the topic he preached about, she described his approach to the Homily as a lesson for every person, Catholic or not, "That is what being religious is about for me. Every week I think people are just reciting stuff and not thinking about it. I feel called to be a parishioner here though I still have a complicated relationship with the church. I feel safe here, and I never felt that before. Ever. I trust everyone here and don't have to hide who I am. That's the most significant difference for me." Cheryl's description emphasizes the importance of finding a place within a community. These communal dynamics contextualize and give meaning to the experience: "I thought I would never step foot inside a Catholic church again, but the people here have transformed that experience, and I experience music differently as a result."

Coming from a Mexican background, my husband and I have a unique perspective on the church. We are Mexican, and Mexican social culture incorporates the church. My husband wrote a mass for his graduate degree. He used the Latin texts of the Mass and texts collected from detained Mexican immigrants and wove them together. Hearing the words of these detainees juxtaposed with the Mass was very jarring and unsettling for me. I had a lot of thinking to do. This was at the same time I got hired here at St. Vincent. I wondered why God would put me in place like this. How could people express such profound faith while experiencing such atrocities?

I started listening more. I began to research and consider what different composers were saying about the Mass and Catholicism through their music. Their perspectives and relationships with the church have changed things for me.

Cheryl's new perspectives deserve more attention, but time limitations in the group setting required moving on to include Megan and Jeanenne. Their stories were similar in that they also had to contend with issues regarding the institutional church. Jeanenne found her way back to the church when she got married. St. Vincent became her spiritual home because the community allowed her to profess her faith while continuing to have doubts and questions about the institution. As a college student, Megan sings in the choir because "DePaul is such a music-forward school that I don't have time to join the chamber chorale because they rehearse five times a week, and I can't make the commitment. Being here at the parish is a really good weekend reset. It's the best way to start my week doing something I love." The exchange between Megan and Jeanenne was enlightening as they discovered similarities in their faith trajectories at very different stages of their lives.

Apart from the faith-related discussion, the group recognized the impacts of music on individuals and communities. One area of focus was how music impacts mood and brain function. Jeanenne noted how therapy for people with dementia incorporates music. By using different parts of the brain, music can reach people with dementia and help them reconnect to their past while having a calming effect. Cheryl discussed her teaching background and how she has witnessed music's impact on young children. She especially noted children in third, fourth, and fifth grades who find an emotional outlet in music. As a 'choir kid' who did not engage in sports, music helped her cope with deaths in her family and with school in general.

Conversely, Cheryl does not relegate music to an emotional influence. She sees music as a giant puzzle that forces her to engage intellectually. While she is a skilled sightreader, she noted how on a recent reading of a Charpentier Mass, she had to work outside the choir's rehearsal because it was so challenging. The music was exciting because of the cognitive challenge: "It's a rush when you experience the learning aspect."

Noting the same type of experience, Megan described how she met all her friends in school through music. Making music was what she liked to do the most. There is progressive gratification when a group of people work very hard over a long time and then produce something beautiful. However, she suggested that when a group setting becomes competitive, it can play against her insecurities. Cheryl reinforced this notion by recalling her time as a student in a conservatory setting. When people were competitive, she allowed them but reassured herself that her purpose of being there was to learn and sing: "We all show up and have to learn our notes. Being in a church choir can differ from being in a select college choir. We are connected to others with a higher purpose in our ministry." Another negative experience for her regarded certain styles of music that could be problematic: "Certain styles of music can bring toxicity to

the table because people think their preferred style of music is superior. The *I'm better than you* attitude that goes with that can be hard to minimize without spoiling the experience of something new and different.”

Ann made another observation about the positive and negative effects of music. She made a comparison to a baseball team that is on the field and pulls together to do its part. Likewise, when ministers in the choir work hard to produce something beautiful, they work as a team, sharing that experience with the assembly. Ann and Jeanenne believe music is one of the reasons people come to St. Vincent for that experience.

The focus group also delved deeper into the subject of beauty compared to the individual interviews. They acknowledged that from a purely Western, tonal point of view, there is an endless array of harmonic and melodic treatments of liturgical texts that are ‘insanely gorgeous.’ Surprisingly, however, the conversation went beyond the subjective experience of music to include an objective one. Cheryl offered some keen insight: “So much is beautiful, even if it doesn't sound beautiful to certain ears. Some compositions are dissonant, and they make you stop and wonder. So much is very dissonant, but the context makes it much more beautiful. You might have to sit with it and ask why this part of the Mass sounds this way to a particular composer, unlike someone like Mozart.”

Jeanenne approached beauty in the context of style. She said that soon after she married her husband, he turned the radio to a classical music station. She had no idea this was an interest of his, and it certainly was not an interest of hers to that point in her life. However, it made an impression on her, and as she listened more, she realized something spoke to her that she had not experienced before. Up to that point in her life, she only interacted with one genre of music. She stated, “People who listen to popular music all the time may not find what [our choir does]

especially appealing. But I guess I'm proof that someone who only listened to pop music and switched to church music finds it can be beautiful. The more you do it, the more you understand and appreciate it. Both the complexities and simplicity engage you.” Megan added that singing adds to her appreciation. Experiencing music of different periods and styles helps her appreciate all that goes into a communal experience of beauty, which can be an expression of prayer.

There are drawbacks that these ministers face, however. Singing is not always as prayerful as it could be because they must focus on technical and mechanical aspects. Ann says, “We have a job as choir members that requires a lot of work and concentration, and sometimes I miss what is happening on the altar. But, despite that, I feel like I still get the same grace as the person sitting in the pew.” Cheryl added that while there is a lot of focus on technique and musicianship, the music is prayer, and when she can let go, she feels a profound release. And for Jeanenne, during the two years of coronavirus that she watched the parish Mass live stream on Facebook, she observed much more through the camera lens, though she would instead have been singing.

The focus group format was conducive to reflection on group experiences as well. Unlike the personal interviews, the focus group participants were able to reflect together on how their ministry transformed them as a group. Over the years, there has been an obvious progression in the relationships between the choir members. In the early days of working together, people hardly knew each other. Singers came to rehearsal, learned their notes, and had minimal interaction. However, over the years, people opened their homes to gatherings that included other choir members. As a result, the group's interpersonal dynamics changed dramatically.

One choir member started inviting singers over for an annual Octoberfest. Then another choir member started hosting an annual Christmas party at her house. Before long, holiday

games and a gift swap with some hysterical exchanges became yearly traditions. As expected, a marvelous transformation occurred as people in this ministry became friends outside of the parish.

Ann observed how a core group of volunteer singers had anchored the choir's membership over the last 25 years. She remarked, "The sense that the core is still here is comforting. I still have all my old friends. We're still here, and I'm more motivated than ever." This nucleus maintains an extensive repertoire, welcomes new members, and provides a solid foundation to sustain the group during low membership.

While this core group of ministers has been an unwavering bedrock for a generation, many other singers have joined the choir for a few years and moved on. Accordingly, there is considerable turnover, or transiency, in a university environment. Students come and go while many other young adults find their life partners, have children and inevitably move to the suburbs. Part of the core group's ministry also seems to be forming new music ministers who move on to continue their ministry elsewhere.

The focus group discussed additional ways they have observed transformation through their ministry. One year's study focused on the compositions of composer Michael Sullivan, the last of a distinguished line of organists at the parish in the twentieth century. His tenure was from 1974 to 1979. The 1970s was a tumultuous period as the church worldwide was assimilating the monumental changes that resulted from the Second Vatican Council. At the same time, cultural influences railed against traditional institutional models. As a result, composers wrote new music in the vernacular and experimented with musical forms for the liturgy. Sullivan was a skilled composer who wrote in a mature, Classical style bridging old and new approaches to the liturgy.

Although much of his music was published during his lifetime, a greater volume exists in manuscript form now cataloged in DePaul University's special collections at Richardson Library.

The opportunity to study the music of a talented composer with a direct connection to the parish, its music and history significantly impacted music ministers. They recalled how fortunate they were to have met Sullivan while he was still living, to hear stories of the parish during his tenure, and to connect with his generation's music that is still relevant today. At one particular liturgy, the choir sang Sullivan's music with the composer in the assembly. Afterward, the pastor invited him to the altar to introduce and acknowledge him for his tremendous contribution a few generations prior. Having a history of noteworthy organists and composers spanning 125 years at a parish is entirely irrelevant if that story goes untold. In this regard, music ministers today see it as their role to tell the story that connects the generations that have gone before.

Another way of telling the story is through program notes included in the printed Order of Mass each week. Jeanenne said, "When we include notes in the program for the congregation, it makes what we do so much more meaningful. Biographies, historical information, and stories about the culture where it came from all contribute to everyone's appreciation." Even if a particular piece of music does not resonate with someone, they can situate the music within some context to give it greater meaning and add to their experience.

Summary: Focus Group Study

The individual interviews and the focus group used the same questions aiming at the theoretical underpinnings where music and theology converge. However, opening the questions for discussion among multiple participants created a different experience. The focus group went much deeper into the questions by sharing stories which triggered additional responses from others. While the individual interviews primarily focused on personal experiences, the focus

group naturally went further by exploring the group's dynamic transformational experiences as a team of ministers.

Survey of the Assembly

A poll of the assembly suggests that an educational approach to music in liturgy had a positive effect. Since the coronavirus pandemic, an average of 400 people now attend one of four weekend Masses. A survey of these people yielded 51 responses, a response rate of approximately 13%. Moreover, 39 of these responses were from people that have been parishioners for more than five years. With 75% of respondents having a length of tenure preceding the coronavirus pandemic, this cohort would have had plenty of exposure to a curriculum-based approach to music at the 10:00 a.m. choir Mass.

Additionally, 48% of all respondents regularly attend 10:00 a.m. Mass. The next largest group of Mass attendees, 28%, goes to the 5:00 p.m. Mass on Sunday, when the contemporary music ensemble sings. Finally, the smallest group, 12 people, attend a Mass where a choir does not sing. These Masses include music but are scaled back to a single cantor without a supporting choir.

When asked about the importance of music to the liturgical experience, no one responded that they wished the parish offered a Sunday Mass without music. However, a small cohort of five people indicated they do not have any particular feeling about their affinity to music as long it is done well. Nevertheless, over 90% of respondents agreed that music is a critical element of the liturgy, with 35% saying music is one of the primary reasons they choose to attend Mass at St. Vincent.

Except for four people, everyone indicated that they participate in singing when they know the music, and it is not too difficult, with nearly 50% acknowledging that singing is how

they praise God. Likewise, two-thirds of the respondents indicated that learning about the church's music through bulletin articles and their exposure to it helped them gain an appreciation for different musical styles and traditions. Nearly one-half of all people said that the more they learn about music, the more engaged they are in the liturgy.

Summary of Survey Results

A brief survey of people who regularly attend Sunday Mass indicates the importance of music to this congregation. People generally understand that music is a primary means of offering communal praise and thanksgiving. Likewise, all people surveyed suggest they are *internal* participants in music. The conclusion here results from everyone indicating that the presence of music is essential and that it needs to be of good quality. Similarly, most people suggest they are *external* participants in music through participation in communal singing. Finally, in most cases, participants in the survey acknowledge that learning about music and being exposed to music of different periods, styles, cultures, and so forth increases their awareness and engagement.

Discrepant Cases and Non-Confirming Data

Discrepant cases within the data are included above with the findings. Perhaps the clearest case regarded Bill's lack of association between his music experience in the liturgy with anything spiritual. Also, the questions elicited non-confirming data by prompting reflection on negative experiences or ways musical and theological theories do not apply. While these types of responses were minimal, they are all included in the reporting and analysis.

Discussion of the Research Question

The objectives of this case study were to examine the efficacy of a curriculum-based approach to designing and implementing a liturgical music program. To this end, the following

research question was posited: What are the experiences of liturgical music ministers in an education-based liturgical music program? Several themes related to theology and music were used to interrogate this question, such as contextualizing ministry as a calling, the experience of beauty, the experience of prayer, transformation through experiential learning, and the dynamic of working together within a communal experience. Applying typologies to the data, themes, relationships, and patterns emerged until no new information was uncovered. The presentation of data in this study is a thorough examination of the experiences of music ministers in a curriculum-styled program.

Quality of the Data

As discussed in chapter three, qualitative research was used to examine individual subjects in particular situations, considering various roles, interactions, and group dynamics based on research methods reviewed by Chilisa and Kawulich (2012). Questions were designed to elucidate anticipated typological themes for organizing the analysis. All of the guidelines set forth by DePaul University's Institutional Review Board were followed (protocol approval #IRB-2022-694). The individual interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants were asked to review the transcriptions for accuracy and make clarifications. Additionally, a research assistant was used to lead the personal interviews and verify the accuracy of the data. The resulting changes to the transcripts were minimal, primarily along the lines of editing to improve grammar.

Summary

Individual interviews, a focus group, and a survey were the basis of data collection for this case study. Individual interviews tended to highlight personal experiences, while the focus group explored transformation as a group experience. The survey provided a context within the

larger community to demonstrate how learning about music and being exposed to the music of different periods, styles and cultures increase awareness and engagement for everyone. A discussion of the findings of this study, along with recommendations for further research, follows in chapter five.

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The conceptual framework for this study used multi-theoretical categories across the fields of music, theology, and education. First, the musician's work was situated within a spiritual or faith-based context using Hahnenberg's conceptualization of ministry as a calling. The purpose here was not to prove the existence of God but rather to assert that people in ministry generally consider their work inspired or motivated by something of divine substance. The concept of a calling helps to understand peak experiences and spiritual transformation throughout a person's life from a theological standpoint.

Secondly, a systematic theological inquiry requires a constructivist epistemology. A positivist worldview does not adequately reveal God or faith in God because knowledge of God is not empirical. When a person identifies an experience as being an experience of God, reflection and judgment are necessary to assert an informed conclusion. Constructivist epistemology is a process that theology, music, and education all share.

Several theories about the nature of music establish this study's theological underpinnings. First, Maximus' views of polarities and motion provided a basis for understanding objective and subjective modes of thinking across a spectrum. Additionally, his theory of motion describes how transformation occurs through time. Second, Begbie develops the concept of transformation by thinking of performed music in the context of theological research. Third, to understand the nature of music and its inherent power to transform, Viladeseau elucidates the nature of beauty, who gets to define beauty, and how beauty applies to theology. Fourth, Balthasar advances theories of beauty by describing sacred art as having the essence of the divine emanating from within. Finally, in a monumental effort to unite multi-

disciplinary approaches of music and theology, Heany synthesizes epistemology, semiology, and hermeneutics.

Since the Second Vatican Council, extensive work in liturgical music has focused on music and the mediation of faith. However, despite general agreement *that* music mediates faith, there appears to be a greater need for understanding *how* music mediates faith. Moreover, to a great degree, the field remains divided and perhaps even hostile between traditional and contemporary styles of music in the liturgy. While a vast output of scholarly material supports opposing views, the subjective nature of the polarities perpetuates a cyclical conversation. Although the church provides clear objectives for approaching music in the liturgy, interpreting, and implementing these objectives necessitates filtering them through the subjective human experience. To this end, applying educational theory and case study research to church music does not eliminate conflict; it embraces it as a tool for examining how music mediates faith in the liturgy.

The implementation of music in the liturgy is vast and varied and, often, a direct result of an agreement between a music director and a pastor. Schiro's four educational models provide one way of thinking about the design of a parish music program. In the *scholar/academic* model, tradition plays a critical role in setting parameters for defining the way things 'should be.' As a result, there is often a hierarchy of learning that does not typically encourage questioning.

Conversely, the *social reconstructionist* generally views the Second Vatican Council as a 'rupture' from the past, creating an opportunity to establish a new ecclesiastical paradigm. In this model, social order needs fixing by removing unwanted aspects and replacing them with new options to create maximum satisfaction with material, spiritual, or creative aspirations.

The commercial enterprise drives the third and perhaps most widely practiced approach to parish music programs. *Social efficiency* seeks the cause-effect or action-reaction stimulus and response. The value assigned to music corresponds directly to the court of popular opinion, which in turn drives a massive profit margin for private publishers. Publishers, however, make a critical investment in product research and development necessary for sustained growth.

These educational models—scholar/academic, social reconstructionist, and social efficiency—may all be practiced to varying degrees within the same music program. It is unlikely that the design of any one program will fit concisely within one specific category. Instead, the models are intended to provide a practical means for thinking about the dominant underlying dynamics at play. The premise of this study is to assert a *learner-focused* approach. This approach intentionally shifts the emphasis away from those mentioned above toward the experiential nature of music and theology. The learning process engages a subsequent reaction, reflection, and conclusion about an experience, contributing to increased knowledge.

As discussed in detail, the music ministry at St. Vincent de Paul has used a learner-focused model to shape the direction of its music program. There are several intended outcomes of this model. First, the options for programming music incorporate all compatible musical traditions, not just what is commercially popular or falls within a traditional category. Some examples that have been studied include Eastern Rite chant, Liturgical uses of jazz and gospel, music of British Colonial America, music of the Second New England School, music of the Bolivian Indian missions, and uses of minimalism in sacred music. As a result of creating a culture of learning, the wider community has moved from being receptive to multiple and diverse musical styles to demanding them.

Secondly, intentionally expanding the experience of music in the liturgy fosters appreciation. Familiarity and increased knowledge of any subject are necessary to gain understanding. Telling the story behind the music provides an essential context for historical connections, theological implications, and cultural and secular influences. The learner-focused model is not concerned about popularity. Instead, it strives to create a culture of openness among the community to learn new things and challenge previously held assumptions. It does not settle for believing a particular way but instead provides a challenge by asking why we believe what we believe.

The people who reflected on their experiences as music ministers for this project provided a critical glimpse of how the subjective experience is transformative. Every individual has a unique story that stems from a unique background. These varying backgrounds inform distinct conclusions that are exclusive to each person. Not everyone went away fond of everything they encountered in the learner-focused model. Nevertheless, each music minister conveyed an unmistakable appreciation of the subject material through increased exposure, awareness, and understanding. They were also, in most cases, able to make explicit connections between music and their faith. Additionally, this approach successfully motivated ministers to continue their work as lifelong learners in their ministry.

Using a learner-focused model necessitates the music director taking on a teacher's persona to move and guide ministers and the assembly through a transformation process. This process moves beyond satisfying the requirements of music for a given liturgy. Instead, it requires careful planning of a curriculum that considers content over a specified period with a particular learning objective.

As a music minister, educator, and researcher, I was surprised by the study's results. I went into this project thinking I would empirically prove my bias toward traditional music in the liturgy. It seemed logical to me that people who embraced other approaches or had different fundamental beliefs just had not had the right experiences to make the same 'correct' conclusion that I had made. The motive for implementing a learner-centered approach to music came from a long-held belief that people who did not appreciate chant, polyphony, or other classical styles of sacred music had not had the right experiences.

A learner-centered method for designing a music program disarmed people by creating an open-minded atmosphere to explore different things. Moreover, there is no question that people gained in their appreciation of things that were part of a positive experience. Furthermore, the shared experience and reflection created a collegial atmosphere where differences were embraced and respected. There is no disputing that these are all good things.

The surprise, however, is that while people expanded their knowledge and appreciation of vastly different musical styles in the liturgy, so did I. To this end, perhaps the most significant realization regards the subjective nature of beauty in how it is experienced, received, and transformed at both the individual and corporate levels. There is no empirical, single correct answer but an endless realm of possibility with this discovery. Even the person who does not believe in God, yet is compelled to use their gifts in service to the liturgy, contains within them an infinite possibility to grow in faith. In this regard, I see how aligning my role as a music director has also made me a student. How exciting to realize we are all in it together. When the scope of our learning and appreciation is allowed to move beyond a personal bias, it becomes open to countless possibilities.

Recommendations

Case study research is a formal process that uses small, incremental observations in controlled settings to advance entire fields of knowledge. This type of research is especially effective in education, where case studies are indispensable. Critical thinking in the form of experienced-based, peer-reviewed research has had a tremendous impact in parallel fields of inquiry and applies to music and theology. Establishing a practical critical theory for examining music and theology opens the possibility to ongoing case study research, much as it has benefited the field of education.

Moreover, designing parish music programs using a curricular approach lays the groundwork for case study research. Music in the liturgy must be appropriate to the Gospel, liturgy, and community. However, all of this can be accomplished within the structure of systematic learning that reflects on the experience.

The research presented in this project could be expanded by examining parishes that are well known for their fundamental differences in musical styles. A wide array of parishes in the City of Chicago could make excellent case studies. To an outside observer, St. John Cantius Parish in Chicago follows a traditional scholar-academic model. This parish is operated by a religious order whose charism is to preserve sacred tradition, particularly regarding liturgy and sacred art. Along these lines, much could be learned from the Anglo-Catholic community at Ascension Episcopal Parish. Though they are not in communion with Rome, their classical approach to the Western Rite Liturgy is exemplary.

A parish that appears to approach music and liturgy from the standpoint of the social-efficiency model is Old St. Pat's. Their music program has an excellent reputation for its

performance quality and for embracing what is most popular and current. They are also known for investing significant resources into this ministry.

Another example is St. Teresa of Avila Parish, which is only a few blocks south of St. Vincent de Paul. St. Teresa is a community that heavily emphasizes issues such as race, poverty, and gender, so much so that these are defining characteristics of their mission as a parish to confront and remediate injustice. Their music program is contemporary in style and reflects the social-reconstructionist approach.

Another way to expand upon the learner-centered model using case study material would be to reflect upon specific learning projects. For instance, if a specific amount of time is devoted to studying the music of the Byzantine Rite, make a study out of it. This would include a learning objective with a formal review of experience and conclusions to share with colleagues. This approach is limited only to the extent of the group's creativity.

In the half-century that followed Vatican II, church musicians have done an exceptional job advancing scholarship that supports academic research and examines the social implications for music in the liturgy. Whether the current model is primarily scholar/academic, social reconstructionist, or even social efficiency, an emphasis on curriculum-based, case study research can provide an effective means of evolving full, conscious, and active participation to the next level.

Appendix: Interview Questions

Biographical Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. How long have you been a minister of music?
4. What attracted you to this ministry?
5. What does it mean to you to be a music minister?
6. How does your ministry as a musician enrich your life?
7. Describe your religious background.
8. Describe your musical background.
9. Identify the key people that have played a role in your spiritual development.
10. Identify the key people that have played a role in your musical development.

Theoretical and Methodological Questions

1. Describe both positive and negative effects that music may have on individuals.
2. Describe both positive and negative effects that music may have on a community.
3. In what ways does music engage your thought process?
4. How do these thoughts carry over into emotions brought about by music?
5. How does the experience of music-making on Sundays carry over into the week?
6. What are the different ways that music functions in the liturgy for you?
7. When is church music beautiful?
8. When is church music prayerful?
9. Identify ways in which music is a personal experience.
10. Identify ways in which music is a communal experience.

11. What examples can you give of major cultural influences on music in the church?
12. What examples can you give of significant historical periods of music that are relevant in today's church (such as the Renaissance)?
13. What are some milestones in your life that might illustrate how your faith has been transformed over the years by music?
14. Has music contributed to this transformation, and if so, how?
15. If you could change the future direction of music in the church, what would you like to change?

Additional Questions for Focus Group

1. How has this ministry changed us as a group?
2. What has been your favorite study and why?
3. What curriculum topics would you like to repeat?

Questions for Survey of Assembly/Congregation

1. How long have you been attending Sunday Mass at St. Vincent?
2. Less than a year
3. More than a year but not before the start of the coronavirus pandemic
4. Before the pandemic but less than five years
5. More than five years
6. Which Sunday Mass do you primarily attend?
 - a. The Saturday night anticipated Mass at 5:00 p.m.
 - b. Sunday at 8:00 a.m.
 - c. Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
 - d. Sunday at 5:00 p.m.

7. How important is music to your overall worship experience at St. Vincent?
 - a. I wish there were a Sunday Mass without music
 - b. It's fine as long as it's done well
 - c. Music is an essential element of the Mass
 - d. Music is one of the primary reasons I come to St. Vincent.
8. Which best describes your experience singing from the pew?
 - a. I don't sing
 - b. I sing when I know the music, and it's not too difficult
 - c. Singing is how I praise God
 - d. Just try to shut me up!
9. How does the music program here contribute to your appreciation for music in the liturgy?
 - a. I'm still too new here/it's not something that matters too much
 - b. As long as the music sounds good, that's what matters
 - c. I enjoy learning about different musical traditions
 - d. The more I know about the church's music, the more engaged I am in the liturgy

Endnotes

Chapter I

¹ The *Latin Rite* Church (headed by the pope in the West) and the Oriental Churches of the East (each with their own patriarch or spiritual leader) maintain separate liturgical rites expressing one universal faith. Reference to the Latin Rite Liturgy or simply ‘the liturgy’ throughout this paper refers to that of the Western Roman Catholic tradition.

² *Traditional* and *contemporary* musical styles are broad terms used here to describe a phenomenon that occurred after the Second Vatican Council. Contemporary music grew from a folk music movement incorporating song form and other popular conventions. These developments are primarily attributed to permitting vernacular languages (replacing Latin and Greek texts) and using music other than chant and polyphony in the liturgy. Traditional music in the liturgy is generally associated with the oral and written tradition of chant, polyphonic motets, and specific compositional techniques.

³ *Sacred tradition* implies more than simply following a historical precedent in this context. The church teaches that revelation from God occurs in written practice through Scripture and lived tradition through the experiences of the ecclesiastical community. Specifically, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in paragraph 78, defines sacred tradition: “This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she is and believes.”

⁴ A *Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music* is an academic institution established by the Vatican. It is a legal entity bound by the rules of canon law (church law) with acts approved by

the Institute's Academic Council. The school confers the degrees of Baccalaureate, Licentiate, Master, and Ph.D.

⁵*Body of Christ* refers to the communion of believers Baptized into the Christian faith.

⁶*Consecrated* life describes those who are not ordained clergy but have taken vows of chastity and obedience and typically live in a religious community of nuns, monks, brothers, and so forth.

⁷The *Easter Exsultet* is a lengthy proclamation of Easter chanted by a deacon or other appointed minister at the Easter vigil.

⁸*Association of the Miraculous Medal* is an organization dedicated to perpetual prayer in devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The association is part of the Vincentian family (assigned to the company of St. Vincent de Paul) and has thousands of dedicated members worldwide.

Chapter II

¹*Theology* is generally described as faith-seeking understanding. When discussing the relationship between music and theology in the context of this paper, the English derivation of the Greek word *theologia* is more precise. In this regard, the roots *theos*, meaning God, and *logia*, meaning word, are taken as the *Word of God*. Music, as a function of logos, suggests that the Word of God can be expressed in writing, verbal, and musical utterances.

²The Roman Gradual, or *Graduale Romanum*, is the official liturgical book of the Latin Rite liturgy, which contains the appointed chants for the Mass. The chants which change for each feast minimally include the Introit (entrance procession), Gradual (response to the Old Testament reading), Alleluia (acclamation before the Gospel reading), Offertory, and Communion.

³There is a vast, historical complexity of what comprises the communion of churches throughout the world. The Latin Rite Church (headed by the pope in the West) and the Oriental

Churches of the East (each with their patriarch) maintain separate liturgical rites expressing one universal faith. The Bishop of Rome (primate, or pope, of the Western Church) is considered the first among the patriarchs because of his direct lineage to St. Peter (considered by Roman Catholics to be the first pope).

⁴The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes a "sacramental" as:

Holy Mother Church has, moreover, instituted sacramentals. These are sacred signs which bear a resemblance to the sacraments. They signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church (Catechism, n.d., part II.II.IV.1667).

A sacramental can confer holiness, such as a blessing, sign, symbol, or music.

⁵Foundations in theology engage critical dialogue between major contemporary themes such as war and peace, justice and equality, gender and sexuality, and poverty and economic inequality. This line of inquiry uses Scripture, reason, and tradition to inform faith. Likewise, dialectics uses logical reasoning through critical dialogue; however, according to dialectic theology, the Divine is knowable as God reveals himself. Comprehension of God is beyond human capacity, and aspects of God that are known are the result of God's revelation. What is not known is left to faith.

⁶The Rule of Saint Benedict was written in 516 by St. Benedict. It establishes a code of conduct for those living in monastic religious life. The rules are still in everyday use today.

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