

MUSICIANS MUSINGS

Sunday, August 15, St. Benedict's will offer a Latin Mass celebrated in the Extraordinary Format 1:00pm. This is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and will feature a mixed chorus of men and women raising their voices in polyphony. A portion of this music will also be sung at the 5:00pm vigil Mass on Saturday, August 14.

Polyphony is defined as a musical texture consisting of two or more independent melodic voices, as opposed to music with just one voice (monophony) or music with one dominant melodic voice accompanied by chords (homophony).

The Second Vatican Council states in the GIRM (General Instruction on the Roman Missal):

39. The Christian faithful who gather together as one to await the Lord's coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (cf. Col 3:16). Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (cf. Acts 2:46). Thus St. Augustine says rightly, "Singing is for one who loves." There is also the ancient proverb: "One who sings well prays twice."

41. All other things being equal, Gregorian chant holds pride of place because it is proper to the Roman Liturgy. Other types of sacred music, in particular polyphony, are in no way excluded, provided that they correspond to the spirit of the liturgical action and that they foster the participation of all the faithful.

Since faithful from different countries come together ever more frequently, it is fitting that they know how to sing together at least some parts of the Ordinary of the Mass in Latin, especially the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, set to the simpler melodies.

This is a rare treat to hear the Ordinary parts (Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei) of the Mass written by Josquin de Prez, an example of four part polyphony at its finest, set to the liturgical action of the Mass.

Composed over five centuries ago, it is still timeless in its objective beauty and style, making it quite fitting to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in accord with the recommendations set forth by the Second Vatican Council. This style of music, which resonates with a woven harmony, requires preparation and effort and the musicians have worked hard to bring forth a splendid Renaissance choral sound. This polyphony, literally 'point against point', consists of an ebb and flow of dissonance/consonance or tonal conflict/resolution.

Please join us for this sacred and beautiful way to celebrate the Mass as we glorify God so that we in turn receive sanctification.

Sandy Eller
Music Coordinator