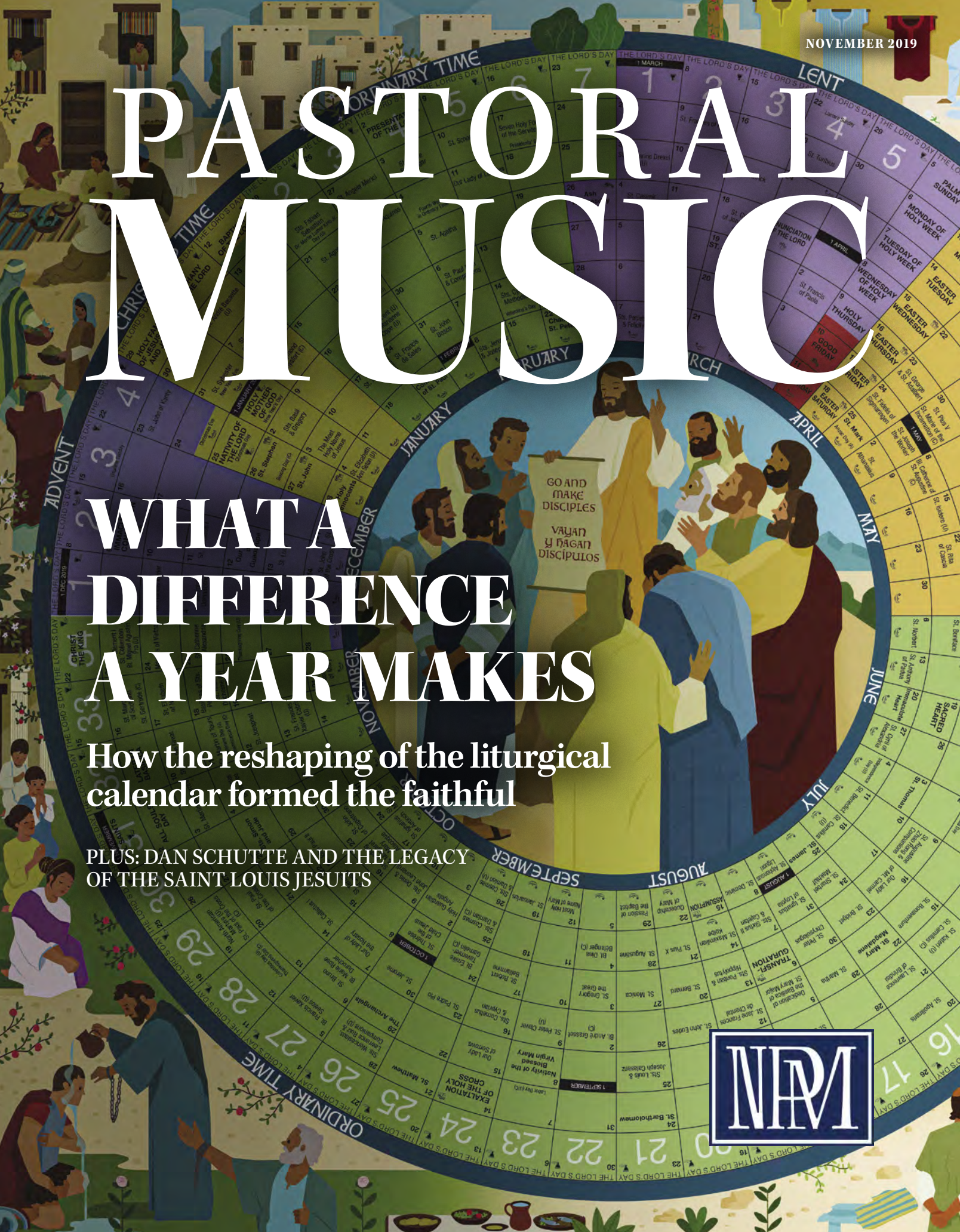


PASTORAL MUSIC

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

How the reshaping of the liturgical calendar formed the faithful

PLUS: DAN SCHUTTE AND THE LEGACY OF THE SAINT LOUIS JESUITS



SOURCE & SUMMIT

How the Commitment to Liturgical Renewal Can Offer Healing

By: John Flaherty



©2019 Libby Vasey

Editor's Note: As we conclude the year's focus on healing, we offer an excerpt from John Flaherty's plenum closing the 2019 NPM convention in Raleigh, North Carolina. To view the full plenum, punctuated by musical performances, go to npm.org, log into the premium member site, and click the From the Convention icon.

"What God does first and best and most is to trust you with this moment in history—your moment—to do what needs to be done for the sake of the whole community." —Walter Brueggemann

That's what we do as people who work in liturgy—as musicians, poets and artists, those who call people to prayer, who comfort and challenge. We have but this one moment, as we know so well. So what will we do with our one wild life?

There's a great book, a primer in many ways, written by John O'Malley, a theologian at Georgetown University: *What happened at Vatican II*.¹ He organizes the language of the Council into five categories:

- Words of equality, which are horizontal words ("people of God," "brothers and sisters," "priesthood of believers," "collegiality")
- Words of reciprocity ("cooperation," "partnership," "collaboration," "dialogue," "conversation")
- Words of humility ("pilgrim," "journey," those in authority are: "servants")
- Words of change ("development," "progress," "evolution")
- And finally, words of interiority ("charism," "conscience," "call to holiness").

This is how the language changed for us after the Second Vatican Council.

John O'Malley also wrote a wonderful article for *America* magazine, "Ten Sure-Fire Ways to Mix up the Teachings of Vatican II."² In it, he says, one sure way to misinterpret the Second Vatican Council is to *not read* all of the documents as a corpus, as a body of work.

And yet isn't that what we do so often—myself included? Don't we cherry-pick the articles and the rubrics to fit what we want to say? However, it's a wonderful exercise to read a citation or an article, see the footnote and its reference, and then follow that to another. And, then, another. It's a never-ending path to deeper understanding of the mystery. That's what we're called to do as liturgists and poets and artists and musicians—to keep learning—to never become complacent or begin to believe we know it all or that we know enough.

You are the poets and the artists of your communities. You describe what is completely indescribable. You give people an image of that which is unimaginable. You give people an image of a God that is beyond all understanding. This can only be done through art.

And you are the prophets of our time. Your role is to comfort and to challenge . . . to provoke God's people to action. As composer Tom Conry said when I was a very young man—and it's remained with me all of these years—"Mass is not only supposed to make you feel good, it's supposed to make you want to do something good."

Rubrics as balm

I'd like to spend time thinking about marrying the head to the heart, the intellect to the affect. You are where the practice happens. You make it come to life. In many cases, you're the best educated members of your communities. And so the challenge is to use the rubrics to heal, and not to hurt. To win hearts and minds, not to work for superiority or arrogance.

I try not to ever use that term "liturgically inappropriate," because that shuts a conversation down. *You can't do "My Way" for the song of sending because it's "liturgically inappropriate."* I'd rather walk with that family and have a conversation. *Is that song really what we want to sing our father or grandfather into heaven with? Why don't we save that for the reception?* The intent is to find a way to win someone's heart, so that we give individuals and families a reason to come back, rather than affirm the reason they left.

That's why it's so important to understand the rubrics. Fr. John Gallen was the Jesuit who mentored me. He always taught that we must know the

rubrics better than anyone. Not so we know what limits us—but so we know what's possible.

A place at table

One of the most important things that we do is we keep a Eucharistic table in our own home. For the last 31 years, my wife Kathy and I have set a table and we've always set one extra place at that table. Don't call us on our phones at dinnertime because we won't answer. But if you knock on the door, and many people have, we'll open that door and there will be a place at our table set just for you. If we don't keep a Eucharistic table in our own home, we can't expect an hour a week to do that which we're not doing in our daily lives.

We had the good fortune of remodeling our house, and so we put that eight-foot table in the geographical center of our home. Isn't it geeky having a Dad as a liturgist? It's in the center of our home; it's in the center of our lives. And we've said to the kids from the time that they were babies that everyone gets to share something at that table. Everyone gets to share during every meal. Because the old ones tend to talk over the little ones. But the little ones have something important to say. That's the Liturgy of the Word. Everyone has something to say that might complete our understanding of why we're here.

So remember your stories, remember your family's stories and share meals together. Christ knew to pass bread and wine was to pass one's very self to the person next to you.

A song of the heart

Years ago, when we realized the Vietnamese community was emerging and growing in Los Angeles, I recognized that we should find out what the Vietnamese Catholic community sings. So I went to my good colleague and friend, Br. Rufino Zaragoza, OFM, who was working with the Vietnamese Catholic community. Rufino brought me three melodies.

I took them to the hair and nail shop owned by Kim, a hairdresser who had cut my hair for 15 years. We talked a lot, and I knew she was Catholic because up next to the Paul Mitchell bottles of shampoo and conditioner, she had a

little statue of Our Lady of La Vang—an image of Mary from the apparation that occurred in Vietnam. I said, “Kim, will you tell me which melody you know and which one you like the best.”

And I sang all three. I didn’t know what each one meant in great depth, but knew a little about each lyric. When I began singing the third piece of music, Kim started sobbing, then crying. She became inconsolable, and broke down completely in the middle of the salon --15 fully occupied pedicure and manicure stations, five chairs occupied by people getting haircuts and several people sitting in the waiting area reading magazines. She’s fallen to the floor and is crying as I’m singing this melody. And I thought, “O Lord, I’ve offended her.”

Then, at that moment in time after we had known one another for 15 years, after all the conversations we shared about our work, spouses and children, she told me her story. She was 16, in the years after the war had ended, when her mother and father walked her to the shore in in the middle of a moonless night in Vietnam. They had shaved her head and dressed her as a man. They walked from the beach out into the ocean and placed her in a boat that was barely seaworthy. She was tucked in between her brother and her uncle so she wouldn’t be raped and thrown overboard as so often happened at the hands of the Thai pirates who patrolled those waters.

The song was the song that Kim’s Mom used to sing to her in Vietnam when she was a little girl. This was the song her Mother sang as she walked her out into the water and placed her in that boat. And this is the melody that then became what is now the best known cross-cultural Vietnamese/English song used in Catholic liturgies, “Tinh Chúa Cao Vòi,” “Boundless Love.”

This is Kim’s story. However, it’s also our story. It’s the story of the Exodus when the Israelites fled from Pharaoh’s armies into the water—across the Red Sea. It’s the story of Moses’ mother who placed that which was most precious to her, her baby, in a basket and set it on the water. Kim’s and Moses’ mothers trusted completely that

God would deliver their beloved babies from persecution to safety, from bondage to freedom. In one form or another, it is your own family’s story.

Your story, my story, our story

In Los Angeles we celebrate Eucharist in over 52 languages every Sunday. Over 110 distinctly different cultures have been identified in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. And 57 of the world’s 196 countries have their greatest concentrations of first- and second-generation immigrants in metropolitan southern California. It’s a rich melting pot.

We hear this term a lot—“multiculturalism.” What that means is you do what you do, while I watch. I do what I do, while you watch. They do what they do, while the rest of us watch. And sometimes we prepare Masses that way. Because heaven forbid we should sing, or do, anything together.

But what we’re called to do is to become a new creation. And this is the essence of “inculturation.” No church organization needs to embrace diversity because of declining membership. It needs to open itself to diversity—the others—because that’s what the Gospel calls us to do.

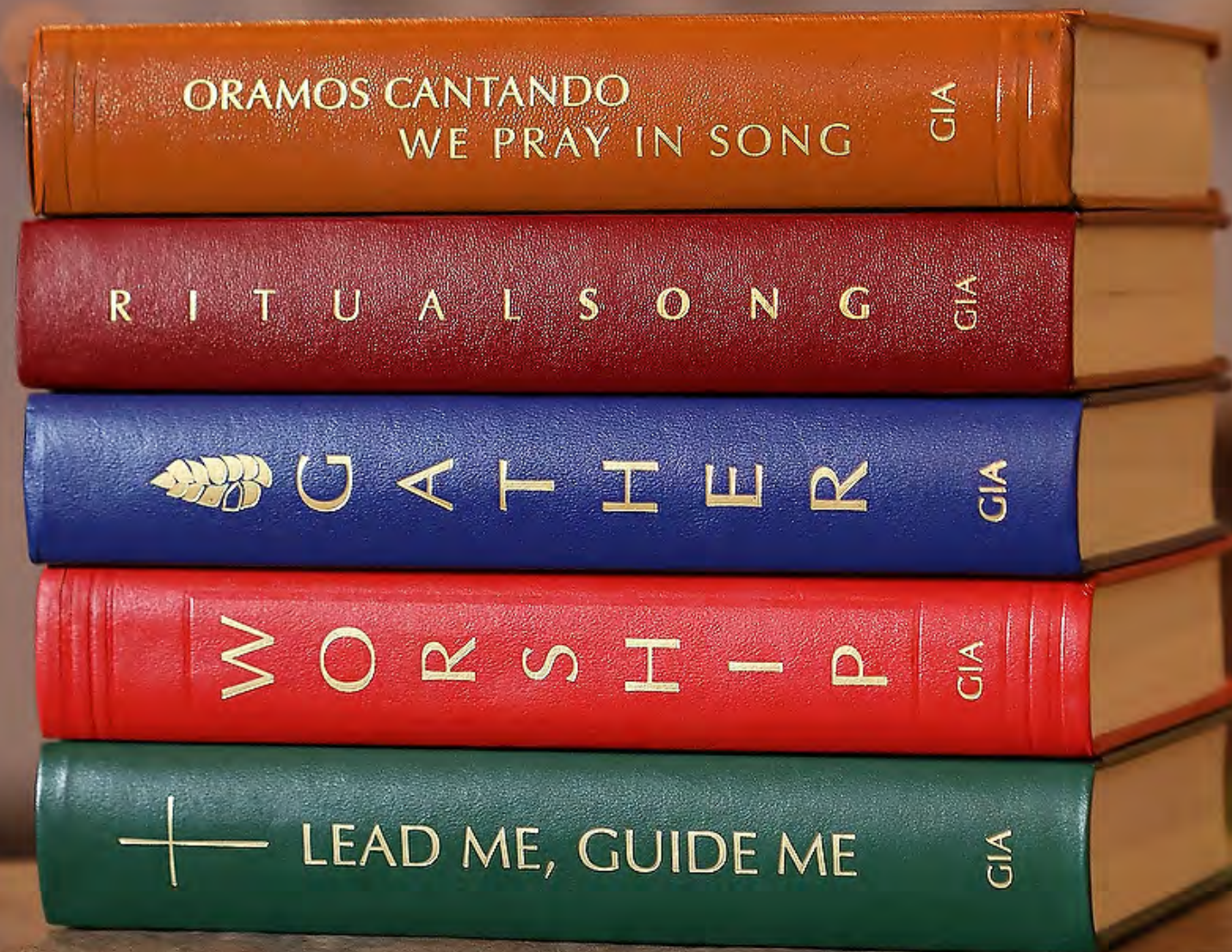
In this regard, we of NPM, like all countries, families and peoples, are called by the Gospel to act from a place of love, not fear, abundance, not poverty, consolation not desolation.

Inculturation and power have everything to do with ownership and possession. If a group of people take ownership of something, they hold it with an open hand. In this model there’s plenty of room for lots of other people to join. And the more people that join, the more life that church, school, organization has and will perpetuate. But if people take possession of it, it’s a closed hand, a closed circle. And we only let in those we want to let in. People like us.

And with ownership and possession come the terms love and fear. William Barry, SJ, writes that when afraid, I pull back from love for others. In effect, I abandon community in order to protect myself. And I may band together with some people like myself, who think like I do, to protect myself and us from the quote/unquote outsiders. But neither my



Your community’s legacy
is not disposable.



group nor I really have what we most deeply want, because we fear what the outsiders might do to take away what we are possessing and protecting.”

Finding—and giving—sustenance

I’m going to switch gears to discuss what it means to build the body of Christ, to heal the body of Christ, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. I love the word “companion,” the etymology of it is “the one who is with bread, the one who sustains you.”

Who is your companion? Who are your companions? I want to surround myself with people who are better than I am in certain areas. Whether you are a choir member or a choir director, surround yourself with people who call you and summon you to be better than you are. That’s one of the rules of chess: you always play someone who’s better than you. And then let them do what they do and don’t hold them back.

More often, though, in our choirs, in our parishes, and in our families—if we’re honest with ourselves—we try to love people into who we think they should be rather than into who God is calling them to be. And, we all know what it feels like when someone tries to change us into who they think we should be or become.

One significant thing

One thing I love about the Second Vatican Council is the empowerment of the laity. It’s what I believe all ministry comes down to—hospitality and welcoming others, teaching and mentoring and empowering. As pastoral musicians, someone saw something in you that you didn’t see in yourself, long before you saw it. And they nurtured it, they coaxed it from you. And sometimes we go kicking and screaming, don’t we? But someone loved you into who God is calling you to be. And you have this great gift of music in your bodies, your souls, your minds. Who were those people? Who mentored you, and, just as important, who are you mentoring?

Sing the liturgy not the song

One final thought: sing the liturgy. Be that poet and artist. I’ll use the funeral liturgy as an example.

I don’t give the grieving family a liturgy and music planning sheet and say, “Fill in the blanks.” I do with every family what I did with my own when my father died. I said to our family:

Eighty-three years ago, a poor working class Irish family brought a baby boy dressed in a little white christening gown to the steps of a church in Brooklyn, New York. They walked into the vestibule of that church and presented that child of God, that little Irish baby, to God. And he was baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Eighty-three years later, we are bringing our father’s body to the vestibule of a church in California. And you’ll be given a white cloth. That’s his christening gown. You get to clothe this child of God in his christening gown, one last time. And he’ll be surrounded by the family that brings him to the church on this day, one last time --the children, the grandchildren, the nieces and nephews. But he’ll also be surrounded by all of those people who brought him to that church in Brooklyn, New York, 83 years ago. They’ll all be there with us. All around us in that great litany of saints.

On the night before my father’s funeral—we called him Pop—we stood in a circle as a family. There were probably 40 or 50 of us. And I said, “Who do we remember who went before Pop and who have welcomed him home?” And we began to remember all of those people by name. And I wrote them down.

The next day when we celebrated my Father’s funeral, the cantor sang all of those names in the Litany of Saints as we processed my Dad’s body in and to the very foot of the altar.

That’s singing the ritual—singing the liturgy—rather than singing songs. There are so many opportunities. It’s all in the rubrics, it’s all there. We just need to read them as poets and artists, not literalists. We just need to unleash and release the possibilities.

¹ *What Happened at Vatican II*. John W. O’Malley. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2008. O’Malley notes that the “special vocabulary of the Council,” its pastoral language is “the issue captured by the expression ‘the spirit of the council,’ that is an orientation that goes beyond specific enactments . . . The literary style (of the Council), was but the surface expression of something meant to sink into the very soul of the church and of every Catholic. It was much more than a tactic or a strategy, much more than simply the adoption of a more “pastoral language.” It was a language–event. The language indicated and induced a shift in values or priorities. To that extent it indicated and induced an inner conversion . . . The council’s language–choice largely explains why “the call to holiness” emerged as such a strong and pervasive theme at the council and is one of its most distinctive marks.” p.11–12.

² “Misdirections: Ten Sure–Fire Ways to Mix up the Teachings of Vatican II,” John W. O’Malley, in *America*, February 4, 2013, America Media.



John Flaherty has been involved in ministry for more than 25 years as an educator, elementary school principal, music director, liturgy director, and published composer. He has served as music director and chair of the

liturgy committee for the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress since 1991. He has served on the editorial boards of Table, Hosanna and Modern Liturgy, and has worked extensively with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. John is currently on the campus ministry team of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, where he serves as director of liturgy and music.



Share the Joy of Ringing

Your handbell program is within reach with Malmark’s Give-A-Bell Fundraising Campaign

Call us today for more information at 1-800-HANDBEL (426-3235)


Malmark
BELL CRAFTSMEN

We’ll provide you with the tools you need to develop a successful fundraising program. It includes a sample handbell, a donor poster, bulletin inserts to announce your campaign and handle inscriptions to honor or memorialize those close to the heart of your donors.



Malmark, Inc. – Bellcraftsmen
P. O. Box 1200 • Plumsteadville, PA 18949
www.malmark.com