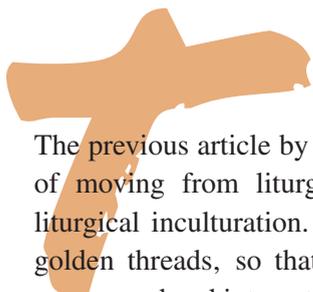


FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE



The previous article by Ricky Manalo speaks of moving from liturgical acculturation to liturgical inculturation. He suggests creating golden threads, so that cultural expressions are weaved and integrated throughout the celebrations. This article (primarily geared for liturgical musicians) will explore the musical forms that music directors may employ in preparing bilingual or multi-lingual celebrations. However, before leaping into the practical “how-to,” I wish to emphasize three pastoral fundamentals, geared primarily for European-Americans, who tend to be leaders of the dominant English-speaking culture.

PASTORAL SKILLS FOR INTERCULTURAL WORSHIP

1. Develop intercultural skills.

Usually ministers from the dominant culture are the ones offering hospitality to immigrants or minority ethnic groups. How does one grow in minority awareness and cross-cultural understanding, and begin learning intercultural communication skills? I highly recommend careful study of the FDLC book *Multicultural Celebrations, A Guide* (#44760TD) and *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (www.nccbuscc.org/publishing/migrants.htm#migrantsandrefugees) as a start. Then one needs to connect with the local gatekeeper or cultural mentor of the parish immigrant group, and humbly grow in skills that were not mentioned in theory class or choral conducting.

2. Move from product to process mentality.

Our American culture values efficiency, competency and clear organization. The greatest temptation of the dominant culture is to place the final product of the intercultural liturgy as a priority over the process of developing relationships that create this liturgy. Most parishes take years to move from liturgical tokenism, ethnic showcasing and ping-ponging ethnic choirs singing different mass selections to intercultural celebrations that arise from reciprocal collaboration and mutual relationship. Invest lavish amounts of time visiting the other ethnic choirs during their rehearsals. Listen to their stories; ask them to teach you some of their favorite songs. Develop this relationship before having planning meetings. The quality of relationships is a priority over the quality of liturgy. Process is more important than product.

3. Examine the decision-making processes.

The model for united worship, the relationships of the liturgical choirs/musicians, and the decision-making process are all intertwined. Space does not allow for a full exploration of these relationships, but the sidebar offers a framework of how communities tend to move from bilingual, to bicultural, to intercultural models of worship, including relationships of musicians and the process of decision-making. Honestly review who holds the power in these decisions, and make the brave resolve to include the minority groups as equal partners in all the decision-making processes.

With these three pastoral foundations, let us explore the four musical forms that are at the disposal of ethnic communities (Spanish, Filipino, American, Vietnamese, and so on) who are developing a liturgical relationship. This area is a recent development in our church and the language is still evolving. The four terms used below are phrases which I find helpful in teaching musicians about intercultural worship. Others may use analogous terms or list these forms differently.

FORMS FOR BILINGUAL/ MULTILINGUAL LITURGIES

1. Neutral Language.

The pre-Vatican II church had common Latin chants that were familiar to everyone. Some have proposed that multi-lingual parishes in the United States can merely return to our Latin heritage as Roman Catholics and find unity expressed through a neutral language. Unfortunately, we now have a new generation that does not even know the *Sanctus XVIII* or the *Agnus Dei XVIII*, not to mention *Parce Domine* or *Salve Regina*. Does it make pastoral sense to have a mixed assembly sing a Latin chant as a common refrain, if none of the ethnic groups, including the European-Americans, includes Latin in its common repertoire? Perhaps this could be encouraged, starting first with the intercultural choir. But this process assumes solid relationships have been developing between the various communities.

One approach would be to choose a Latin chant which might already be in the musical repertoire

of the various cultures. The choirs' directors could agree to teach transliterated settings (see section three) of the Latin chants to their own choirs: English lyrics to the Americans, Tagalog lyrics to the Filipinos, and so on. *Flor y Canto II* (#10652TD) offers Spanish texts of *Attende domine*, *Pange lingua gloriosi* and others. *Chung Loi Tan Tung* (11241TD), a Vietnamese songbook, has verses for *O Filii Et Filiae*. Encourage each choir to learn the text in its own language first, so it becomes familiar with the melody. Then have the choirs, in a joint rehearsal, together learn the Latin text, and rotate among ethnic language verses (English, Spanish, Vietnamese) and the Latin verses.

Ritual music can also be approached using the neutral language of Latin or Greek phrases, or repetition of Hebrew vocabulary. The Alleluia is the easiest Mass part to sing together since the Hebrew word (along with Hosanna and Amen) is common in liturgies of all languages. Go to the Vietnamese or Spanish Mass and learn what they sing each Sunday. If it could work with the regular parish choir, invite the choir director to visit the English-speaking choir rehearsal to teach the refrain. Some common repertoire has wandered over to Spanish, Filipino and Vietnamese celebrations. I have heard versions of "Seek Ye First" and the "Celtic Alleluia" at numerous non-English celebrations.

For eucharistic acclamations I often use call/response versions if the community has not yet learned some bilingual setting. I recommend

reviewing "Misa Juan Diego" (9894TD) or "Misa del Mundo" (11017TD) at a session of the various ethnic choir directors and come to some mutual choice for a common parish repertoire. Perhaps invite the language-shy assembly to repeat only the phrase that contains the word with which they are familiar: Hosanna.

2. Bilingual/Multilingual Music.

I define bilingual/multilingual music as repertoire, combining two or more languages, that is specifically composed for blended celebrations of various cultures. The advantage is that the refrains are usually split, allowing for both groups (often English-and Spanish-speaking) to enter the experience of voicing each other's language in short phrases. The disadvantage is that no one is previously familiar with this music, and sometimes the minority group views the song's inclusion as a tokenistic gesture of the dominant culture. But in many communities, some of the songs (especially by composers like Bob Hurd and Jaime Cortez) have become standards apart from the blended celebration. Sometimes English-speaking Americans sing them at primarily single-language celebrations.

However, do not presume that just because you found a piece in another language that the ethnic group in your parish who speaks that language would want to sing that song. Language is only one part of culture. For example, if you run across a Vietnamese bilingual piece for your Vietnamese/English bilingual liturgy, realize the process of repertoire

choice has just begun, not concluded. Do the Vietnamese text follow proper accents and use appropriate liturgical vocabulary? Does the melodic line and Vietnamese text fit together in the manner of Vietnamese music, or is this text an awkward translation by a well-intentioned translator? Unless you are totally fluent in Vietnamese, how can you decide what Vietnamese piece should be sung at your next blended liturgy?

Go to the Vietnamese community and have them be part of the decision-making process! Empower the music director representatives of that choir to be part of choosing what would be sung at this blended liturgy.

This is especially important in working with Spanish texts. Some bilingual repertoire is composed by non-Spanish speakers and has a linguistic and musical style totally foreign to Hispanics in the United States. Why should European-Americans sing something in Spanish that Hispanic-Americans would never choose to sing on their own? It takes time to find, experiment with, and finally discover (over the years) the selection of bilingual pieces that works for your particular diverse community. A worthy resource to explore would be *Cantare Eternamente* (volume one, 10974TD, volume two, 10976TD)—bilingual psalms for the church year. It offers numerous possibilities and a wide scope of styles for the challenge of bringing two ethnic groups together.

3. Transliterated Repertoire.

By “transliteration” I mean a well-known song composed and used in one language that is completely translated into another lan-

guage. The same melody is used, usually with a paraphrased text, since direct translation is impossible to honor melodic line and rhythmic accents. Sometimes these songs take on a life of their own, losing contact with the original. For example, few Hispanics know that a favorite song for the preparation of the gifts, “*Entre Tus Manos*,” is a translation of a 1966 song by American composer Ray Repp. In my work with the Vietnamese community I have found Vietnamese texts to everything from “Let There Be Peace on Earth” and “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town” to Bach chorales and sections of Handel’s “Messiah.”

Spend time with the ethnic choir director in your parish and find out what already exists in their repertoire. Perhaps you might be fortunate enough to have someone in your diocese who can make dynamic equivalence translations of song texts. Some publishers are now cataloging translations of their more popular songs. Call their customer service staff and ask what they might have on file. Not everything is listed in their general catalog. In a bilingual liturgy, there are various possibilities for alternating the languages of a transliterated hymn or song. I favor choosing songs that have short refrains and having the combined choirs sing it once in the original language and then a second time in the translated language. The verses could rotate between the two languages (by soloists or sections of the combined choir), with the refrain always sung twice in between, offering each language group an opportunity to sing in both its own

and the other’s language.

Another approach would be to determine the dominant language of the assembly and have the refrain sung in that language. The verses alternate between the two languages. If some members of the choir or assembly are not comfortable in the other language, they can be invited to hum the melody of the refrain or verses during that time. (When the Americans are too scared to try the Vietnamese, I enjoy joking with them that Germans I know would attempt “*Stille Nacht*” in English.)

4. Original-Language Repertoire.

After years of learning each other’s immigration stories and cultural devotions, a diverse community would look forward to their occasional blended liturgies as celebrations of their common Christian identity. What would proceed, after exploring songs using neutral language, bilingual and transliterated repertoire, is the openness of the combined assembly to sing a simple refrain from the various cultural traditions. Art, movement, gesture, story and music convey a cultural world view that expresses an inculturation of the Gospel. When we open ourselves to the melodies, rhythms, instruments and musical forms of another culture, we open ourselves to an additional way of voicing prayer and receiving the divine.

This may begin with a combined choir of singers who overcome their fears of not doing it right and develop partners during the blended choir rehearsal. These musicians can coach each other in singing other languages. The different nationalities singing as one group, in all the

different languages, offer a developed alternative to ethnic showcasing at intercultural celebrations.

Spend time with the music leaders of different groups, asking the question “What are basic songs in your repertoire that you would like the English-speaking community to learn?” For those who do not speak Spanish, there are numerous simple refrains in the common Hispanic repertoire: “*Caminaré*” by Espinosa, “*Demos Gracias al Señor*” by Gabarin and one of my favorites, “*Somos una Iglesia*” by Eleazar Cortes.

Are you willing to extend hospitality even further? What if the song selection of some the English language pieces was reversed? Have the Filipino or Tongan choir listen to your favorite American songs, and have them give input to which melodies they like and would be willing to sing in English as part of the combined choir. I did this once with some select Vietnamese singers, and was surprised to learn

which Communion piece they favored. (Not going with my own favorite, but with their choice, was difficult for me. But if they were going to be gracious enough to respond to my invitation to be part of this group, I had to be hospitable enough to offer pieces they would enjoy learning and singing.)

COMBINING FORMS AND EXPRESSIONS

These are four various approaches on music for an intercultural celebration. In choosing music and language, do not forget to include the use of cultural symbols, gestures, scents, artwork and vesture. Do not have music try to carry the total weight of expressing diversity. Review continually the *Guidelines for Multicultural Celebrations* (#44760TD) by Mark Francis, published by FDLC.

Vary the musical forms, using strophic hymns, refrain/verse songs, litanies and call/response formats. Mix Latin or Hebrew common chants with bilingual, transliterated

and original-language repertoire. Developing relationships with another culture and preparing intercultural celebrations are the most challenging, frustrating, yet rewarding labors for liturgists in our contemporary society. When the going gets rough reread pages 2, 4 and 33 of the U.S. Bishops’ Statement *Welcoming the Stranger*. Know that what we do is not just about music, not just about liturgy, but offers a counter-cultural message in today’s world which fears immigrants and questions the foreigner. Jesus’ words remind us, “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.” (Matthew 25:35)

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MODELS OF BI/MULTI-LINGUAL MUSIC IN AN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT

MODEL OF WORSHIP

showcase
ping-pong
bi/multi-lingual
bi/multi-cultural
intercultural

LITURGICAL MUSICIANS

guest appearance
choirs rotate singing
choirs cooperating
assembly cooperating
assembly/choir united

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

dominant culture manipulates
language slot-filling
organized compliance
dialogue exchange
reciprocal collaboration peace