

SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
MUSICAM SACRAM
INSTRUCTION ON MUSIC IN THE LITURGY

5 March, 1967

Preface

- Sacred music, in those aspects which concern the liturgical renewal, was carefully considered by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. It explained its role in divine services, issued a number of principles and laws on this subject in the [Constitution on the Liturgy](#), and devoted to it an entire chapter of the same [Constitution](#).
- The decisions of the Council have already begun to be put into effect in the recently undertaken liturgical renewal. But the new norms concerning the arrangement of the sacred rites and the active participation of the faithful have given rise to several problems regarding sacred music and its ministerial role. These problems appear to be able to be solved by expounding more fully certain relevant principles of the [Constitution on the Liturgy](#).
- Therefore the Consilium set up to implement the [Constitution on the Liturgy](#), on the instructions of the Holy Father, has carefully considered these questions and prepared the present Instruction. This does not, however, gather together all the legislation on sacred music; it only establishes the principal norms which seem to be more necessary for our own day. It is, as it were, a continuation and complement of the preceding Instruction of this Sacred Congregation, prepared by this same Consilium on 26 September 1964, for the correct implementation of the [Liturgy Constitution](#).
- It is to be hoped that pastors of souls, musicians and the faithful will gladly accept these norms and put them into practice, uniting their efforts to attain the true purpose of sacred music, "which is the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful."^[1]

- (a) By sacred music is understood that which, being created for the celebration of divine worship, is endowed with a certain holy sincerity of form.^[2]
- (b) The following come under the title of sacred music here: Gregorian chant, sacred polyphony in its various forms both ancient and modern, sacred music for the organ and other approved instruments, and sacred popular music, be it liturgical or simply religious.^[3]

I. Some General Norms

- Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when it is celebrated in song, with the ministers of each degree fulfilling their ministry and the people participating in it.^[4]
- Indeed, though this form, prayer is expressed in a more attractive way, the mystery of the liturgy, with its hierarchical and community nature, is more openly shown, the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices, minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites, and the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem.

Pastors of souls will therefore do all they can to achieve this form of celebration.

They will try to work out how that assignment of different parts to be performed and duties to be fulfilled, which characterizes sung celebrations, may be transferred even to celebrations which are not sung, but at which the people are present. Above all one must take particular care that the necessary ministers are obtained and that these are suitable, and that the active participation of the people is encouraged.

The practical preparation for each liturgical celebration should be done in a spirit of cooperation by all parties concerned, under the guidance of the rector of the church, whether it be in ritual, pastoral or musical matters.

- The proper arrangement of the liturgical celebration requires the due assignment and performance of certain functions, by which "each person, minister or layman, should carry out all and only those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the norms of the liturgy."^[5] This also demands that a meaning and proper nature of each part and of each song be carefully observed. To attain this, those parts especially should be sung which by their very nature require to be sung, using the kind and form of music which is proper to their character.
- Between the solemn, fuller form of liturgical celebration, in which everything that demands singing is in fact sung, and the simplest form, in which singing is not used, there can be various degrees according to the greater or lesser place allotted to singing. However, in selecting the parts which are to be sung, one should start with those that are by their nature of greater importance, and especially those which are to be sung by the priest or by the ministers, with the people replying, or those which are to be sung by the priest and people together. The other parts may be gradually added according as they are proper to the people alone or to the choir alone.
- Whenever, for a liturgical service which is to be celebrated in sung form, one can make a choice between various people, it is desirable that those who are known to be more proficient in singing be given preference; this is especially the case in more solemn liturgical celebrations and in those which either require more difficult singing, or are transmitted by radio or television.^[6]

If, however, a choice of this kind cannot be made, and the priest or minister does not possess a voice suitable for the proper execution of the singing, he can render without singing one or more of the more difficult parts which concern him, reciting them in a loud and distinct voice. However, this must not be done merely for the convenience of the priest or minister.

- In selecting the kind of sacred music to be used, whether it be for the choir or for the people, the capacities of those who are to sing the music must be taken into account. No kind of sacred music is prohibited from liturgical actions by the Church as long as it corresponds to the spirit of the liturgical celebration itself and the nature of its individual parts,^[7] and does not hinder the active participation of the people.^[8]

- In order that the faithful may actively participate more willingly and with greater benefit, it is fitting that the format of the celebration and the degree of participation in it should be varied as much as possible, according to the solemnity of the day and the nature of the congregation present.

- It should be borne in mind that the true solemnity of liturgical worship depends less on a more ornate form of singing and a more magnificent ceremonial than on its worthy and religious celebration, which takes into account the integrity of the liturgical celebration itself, and the performance of each of its parts according to their own particular nature. To have a more ornate form of singing and a more magnificent ceremonial is at times desirable when there are the resources available to carry them out properly; on the other hand it would be contrary to the true solemnity of the liturgy if this were to lead to a part of the action being omitted, changed, or improperly performed.

- It is for the Holy See alone to determine the more important general principles which are, as it were, the basis of sacred music, according to the norms handed down, but especially according to the [Constitution on the Liturgy](#). Direction in this matter, within the limits laid down, also belongs to the competent territorial Episcopal Conferences of various kinds, which have been legitimately constituted, and to the individual bishop.^[9]

- Liturgical services are celebrations of the Church, that is, of the holy people, united under and directed by the bishop or priest.^[10] The priest and his ministers, because of the sacred order they have received, hold a special place in these celebrations, as do also—by reason of the ministry they perform—the servers, readers, commentators and those in the choir.^[11]

- The priest, acting in the person of Christ, presides over the gathered assembly. Since the prayers which are said or sung by him aloud are proclaimed in the name of the entire holy people and of all present,^[12] they should be devoutly listened to by all.

- The faithful fulfil their liturgical role by making that full, conscious and active participation which is demanded by the nature of the liturgy itself and which is, by reason of baptism, the right and duty of the Christian people.^[13] This participation

- (a) Should be above all internal, in the sense that by it the faithful join their mind to what they pronounce or hear, and cooperate with heavenly grace^[14]

- (b) Must be, on the other hand, external also, that is, such as to show the internal participation by gestures and bodily attitudes, by the acclamations, responses and singing.^[15]

The faithful should also be taught to unite themselves interiorly to what the ministers or choir sing, so that by listening to them they may raise their minds to God.

- One cannot find anything more religious and more joyful in sacred celebrations than a whole congregation expressing its faith and devotion in song. Therefore the active participation of the whole people, which is shown in singing, is to be carefully promoted as follows:

- (a) It should first of all include acclamations, responses to the greetings of the priest and minister and to the prayers of litany form, and also antiphons and psalms, refrains or repeated responses, hymns and canticles.^[16]

- (b) Through suitable instruction and practices, the people should be gradually led to a fuller—indeed, to a complete—participation in those parts of the singing which pertain to them.

- Some of the people's song, however, especially if the faithful have not yet been sufficiently instructed, or if musical settings for several voices are used, can be handed over to the choir alone, provided that the people are not excluded from those parts that concern them. But the usage of entrusting to the choir alone the entire singing of the whole Proper and of the whole Ordinary, to the complete exclusion of the people's participation in the singing, is to be deprecated.

- At the proper times, all should observe a reverent silence!^[17] Through it the faithful are not only not considered as extraneous or dumb spectators at the liturgical service, but are associated more intimately in the mystery that is being celebrated, thanks to that interior disposition which derives from the word of God that they have heard, from the songs and prayers that have been uttered, and from spiritual union with the priest in the parts that he says or sings himself.

- Among the faithful, special attention must be given to the instruction in sacred singing of members of lay religious societies, so that they may support and promote the participation of the people more effectively.^[18] The formation of the whole people in singing, should be seriously and patiently undertaken together with liturgical instruction, according to the age, status and way of life of the faithful and the degree of their religious culture; this should be done even from the first years of education in elementary schools.^[19]

- Because of the liturgical ministry it performs, the choir—or the Capella musica, or schola cantorum—deserves particular mention. Its role has become something of yet greater importance and weight by reason of the norms of the Council concerning the liturgical renewal. Its duty is, in effect, to ensure the proper performance of the parts which belong to it, according to the different kinds of music sung, and to encourage the active participation of the faithful in the singing. Therefore:

- (a) There should be choirs, or Capellae, or scholae cantorum, especially in cathedrals and other major churches, in seminaries and religious houses of studies, and they should be carefully encouraged.

- (b) It would also be desirable for similar choirs to be set up in smaller churches.

- Large choirs (Capellae musicae) existing in basilicas, cathedrals, monasteries and other major churches, which have in the course of centuries earned for themselves high renown by preserving and developing a musical heritage of inestimable value, should be retained for sacred celebrations of a more elaborate kind, according to their own traditional norms, recognized and approved by the Ordinary.

However, the directors of these choirs and the rectors of the churches should take care that the people always associate themselves with the singing by performing at least the easier sections of those parts which belong to them.

- Provision should be made for at least one or two properly trained singers, especially where there is no possibility of setting up even a small choir. The singer will present some simpler musical settings, with the people taking part, and can lead and support the faithful as far as is needed. The presence of such a singer is desirable even in churches which have a choir, for those celebrations in which the choir cannot take part but which may fittingly be performed with some solemnity and therefore with singing.

- The choir can consist, according to the customs of each country and other circumstances, of either men and boys, or men and boys only, or men and women, or even, where there is a genuine case for it, of women only.

- Taking into account the layout of each church, the choir should be placed in such a way:

- (a) That its nature should be clearly apparent—namely, that it is a part of the whole congregation, and that it fulfills a special role;

- (b) That it is easier for it to fulfil its liturgical function;^[20]

- (c) That each of its members may be able to participate easily in the Mass, that is to say by sacramental participation.

Whenever the choir also includes women, it should be placed outside the sanctuary (presbyterium).

- Besides musical formation, suitable liturgical and spiritual formation must also be given to the members of the choir, in such a way that the proper performance of their liturgical role will not only enhance the beauty of the celebration and be an excellent example for the faithful, but will bring spiritual benefit to the choir-members themselves.

- In order that this technical and spiritual formation may more easily be obtained, the diocesan, national and international associations of sacred music should offer their services, especially those that have been approved and several times commended by the Holy See.

- The priest, the sacred ministers and the servers, the readers and those in the choir, and also the commentator, should perform the parts assigned to them in a way which is comprehensible to the people, in order that the responses of the people, when the rite requires it, may be made easy and spontaneous. It is desirable that the priest, and the minister of every degree, should join their voices to the voice of the whole faithful in those parts which concern the people.^[21]

- For the celebration of the Eucharist with the people, especially on Sundays and feast days, a form of sung Mass (Missa in cantu) is to be preferred as much as possible, even several times on the same day.

- The distinction between solemn, sung and read Mass, sanctioned by the Instruction of 1958 (n. 3), is retained, according to the traditional liturgical laws at present in force. However, for the sung Mass (Missa cantata), different degrees of participation are put forward here for reasons of pastoral usefulness, so that it may become easier to make the celebration of Mass more beautiful by singing, according to the capabilities of each congregation.

These degrees are so arranged that the first may be used even by itself, but the second and third, wholly or partially, may never be used without the first. In this way the faithful will be continually led towards an ever greater participation in the singing.

- The following belong to the first degree:

- (a) In the entrance rites: the greeting of the priest together with the reply of the people; the prayer.

- (b) In the Liturgy of the Word: the acclamations at the Gospel.

- (c) In the Eucharistic Liturgy: the prayer over the offerings; the preface with its dialogue and the Sanctus; the final doxology of the Canon, the Lord's prayer with its introduction and embolism; the Pax Domini; the prayer after the Communion; the formulas of dismissal.

- The following belong to the second degree:

- (a) the Kyrie, Gloria and Agnus Dei;

- (b) the Creed;

- (c) the prayer of the faithful.

- The following belong to the third degree:

- (a) the songs at the Entrance and Communion processions;

- (b) the songs after the Lesson or Epistle;

- (c) the Alleluia before the Gospel;

- (d) the song at the Offertory;

- (e) the readings of Sacred Scripture, unless it seems more suitable to proclaim them without singing.

- The custom legitimately in use in certain places and widely confirmed by indults, of substituting other songs for the songs given in the Graduale for the Entrance, Offertory and Communion, can be retained according to the judgment of the competent territorial authority, as long as songs of this sort are in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast or with the liturgical season. It is for the same territorial authority to approve the texts of these songs.

- It is desirable that the assembly of the faithful should participate in the songs of the Proper as much as possible, especially through simple responses and other suitable settings.

The song after the lessons, be it in the form of gradual or responsorial psalm, has a special importance among the songs of the Proper. By its very nature, it forms part of the Liturgy, of the Word. It should be performed with all seated and listening to it—and, what is more, participating in it as far as possible.

- The songs which are called the "Ordinary of the Mass," if they are sung by musical settings written for several voices may be performed by the choir according to the customary norms, either a capella, or with instrumental accompaniment, as long as the people are not completely excluded from taking part in the singing.

In other cases, the parts of the Ordinary of the Mass can be divided between the choir and the people or even between two sections of the people as themselves: one can alternate by verses, or one can follow other suitable divisions which divide the text into larger sections. In these cases, in the following points are to be noted: it is preferable that the Creed, since it is a formula of profession of faith, should be sung by all, or in such a way as to permit a fitting participation by the faithful; it is preferable that the Sanctus, as the concluding acclamation of the Preface, should normally be sung by the whole congregation together with the priest; the Agnus Dei may be repeated as often as necessary, especially in concelebrations, where it accompanies the Fraction; it is desirable that the people should participate in this song, as least by the final invocation.

- The Lord's Prayer is best performed by the people together with the priest.^[22]

If it is sung in Latin, the melodies already legitimately existing should be used; if, however, it is sung in the vernacular, the settings are to be approved by the competent territorial authority.

There is no reason why some of the Proper or Ordinary should not be sung in said Masses. Moreover, some other song can also, on occasions, be sung at the beginning, at the Offertory, at the Communion and at the end of Mass. It is not sufficient, however, that these songs be merely "Eucharistic"—they must be in keeping with the parts of the Mass, with the feast, or with the liturgical season.

II. The Singing Of The Divine Office

- The sung celebration of the Divine Office is the form which best accords with the nature of this prayer. It expresses its solemnity in a fuller way and expresses a deeper union of hearts in performing the praises of God. That is why, in accordance with the wish of the [Constitution on the Liturgy](#),^[23] this sung form is strongly recommended to those who celebrate the Office in choir or in common.

For it is desirable that at least some part of the Divine Office, especially the principal Hours, namely Lauds and Vespers, should be performed in sung form by these people, at least on Sundays and feast days.

Other clerics also, who live in common for the purpose of studies, or who meet for retreats or other purposes, will sanctify their meetings in a very fitting way if they celebrate some parts of the Divine Office in sung form.

When the Divine Office is to be celebrated in sung form, a principle of "progressive" solemnity can be used, inasmuch as those parts which lend themselves more directly to a sung form, e.g. dialogues, hymns, verses and canticles, may be sung, and the rest recited. This does not change the rules at present in force for those obliged to choir, nor does it change particular indults.

- One will invite the faithful, ensuring that they receive the requisite instruction, to celebrate in common on Sundays and feast days certain parts of the Divine Office, especially Vespers, or, according to the customs of the particular area and assembly, other Hours. In general, the faithful, particularly the more educated, should be led by suitable teaching, to understand the psalms in a Christian sense and use them in their own prayers, so that they may gradually acquire a stronger taste for the use of the public prayer of the Church.

- The members of Institutes professing the evangelical virtues should be given special instruction of this type, so that they may draw from it more abundant riches for the development of their spiritual life. It is desirable also that they should participate more fully in the public prayer of the Church by performing the principal Hours of the Office in sung form, as far as possible.

- In accordance with the norm of the Constitution on the Liturgy and the centuries-old tradition of the Latin rite, the Latin language is to be retained for clerics celebrating the Divine Office in choir.^[24] Since however the same Liturgy Constitution^[25] conceals the use of the vernacular in the Divine Office both by the faithful and by nuns and other members of Institutes professing the evangelical virtues, who are not clerics, due care should be taken that melodies are prepared which may be used in the singing of the Divine Office in the vernacular.

III. Sacred Music In The Celebration Of The Sacraments And Sacramentals, In Special Functions Of The Liturgical Year, In Celebrations Of The Word Of God, And In Popular Devotions

- The Council laid down in principle that whenever a rite, in keeping with its character, allows a celebration in common with the attendance and active participation of the faithful, this is to be preferred to an individual and quasi-private celebration of the rite.^[28] It follows logically from this that singing is of great importance since it more clearly demonstrates the 'ecclesial' aspect of the celebration.

- Certain celebrations of the Sacraments and Sacramentals, which have a special importance in the life of the whole parish community, such as confirmation, sacred ordinations, matrimony, the consecration of a church or altar, funerals, etc., should be performed in sung form as far as possible, so that even the solemnity of the rite will contribute to its greater pastoral effectiveness. Nevertheless, the introduction into the celebration of anything which is merely secular, or which is hardly compatible with divine worship, under the guise of solemnity should be carefully avoided; this applies particularly to the celebration of marriages.

- Similarly, celebrations which are singled out by the liturgy in the course of the liturgical year as being of special importance, may be solemnized by singing. In a very special way, the sacred rites of Holy Week should be given due solemnity, since these lead the faithful to the center of the liturgical year and of the liturgy itself through the celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

- For the liturgy of the Sacraments and Sacramentals, and for other special celebrations of the liturgical year, suitable melodies should be provided, which can encourage a celebration in a more solemn form, even in the vernacular, depending on the capabilities of individual congregations and in accordance with the norms of the competent authority.

- Sacred music is also very effective in fostering the devotion of the faithful in celebrations of the word of God, and in popular devotions.

In the celebrations of the word of God,^[27] let the Liturgy of the Word in the Mass^[28] be taken as a model. In all popular devotions the psalms will be especially useful, and also works of sacred music drawn from both the old and the more recent heritage of sacred music, popular religious songs, and the playing of the organ, or of other instruments characteristic of a particular people.

Moreover, in these same popular devotions, and especially in celebrations of the word of God, it is excellent to include as well some of those musical works which, although they no longer have a place in the liturgy, can nevertheless foster a religious spirit and encourage meditation on the sacred mystery.^[29]

IV. The Language To Be Used In Sung Liturgical Celebrations, And On Preserving The Heritage Of Sacred Music

- According to the [Constitution on the Liturgy](#), "the use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites."^[30]

However, since "the use of the vernacular may frequently be of great advantage to the people"^[31] it is for the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language is to be used. Its decrees have to be approved, that is, confirmed by the Apostolic See."^[32]

In observing these norms exactly, one will therefore employ that form of participation which best matches the capabilities of each congregation.

Pastors of souls should take care that besides the vernacular "the faithful may also be able to say or sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them."^[33]

- Where the vernacular has been introduced into the celebration of Mass, the local Ordinaries will judge whether it may be opportune to preserve one or more Masses celebrated in Latin—especially sung Masses (Missa in cantu)—in certain churches, above all in large cities, where many come together with faithful of different languages.

- As regards the use of Latin or the mother tongue in the sacred celebrations carried out in seminaries, the norms of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities concerning the liturgical formation of the students should be observed.

The members of Institutes professing the evangelical virtues should observe, in this matter, the norms contained in the Apostolic Letter *Sacrificium Laudis* of 15 August 1966 besides the Instruction on the language to be used by religious in celebrating the Divine Office and conventual or community Mass, given by this Sacred Congregation of Rites on 23 November 1965.

- In sung liturgical services celebrated in Latin:

- (a) Gregorian chant, as proper to the Roman liturgy, should be given pride of place, other things being equal.^[34] Its melodies, contained in the "typical" editions, should be used, to the extent that this is possible.

- (b) "It is also desirable that an edition be prepared containing simpler melodies, for use in smaller churches."^[36]

- (c) Other musical settings, written for one or more voices, be they taken from the traditional heritage or from new works, should be held in honor, encouraged and used as the occasion demands.^[36]

- Pastors of souls, having taken into consideration pastoral usefulness and the character of their own language, should see whether parts of the heritage of sacred music, written in previous centuries for Latin texts, could also be conveniently used, not only in liturgical celebrations in Latin but also in those performed in the vernacular. There is nothing to prevent different parts in one and the same celebration being sung in different languages.

- In order to preserve the heritage of sacred music and genuinely promote the new forms of sacred singing, "great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutes and schools," especially in those higher institutes intended specially for this.^[37] Above all, the study and practice of Gregorian chant is to be promoted, because, with its special characteristics, it is a basis of great importance for the development of sacred music.

- New works of sacred music should conform faithfully to the principles and norms set out above. In this way they will have "the qualities proper to genuine sacred music, being within the capacities not merely of large choirs but of smaller choirs, facilitating the participation of all the faithful."^[38]

As regards the heritage that has been handed down those parts which correspond to the needs of the renewed liturgy should first be brought to light. Competent experts in this field must then carefully consider whether other parts can be adapted to the same needs. As for those pieces which do not correspond to the nature of the liturgy or cannot be harmonized with the pastoral celebration of the liturgy—they may be profitably transferred to popular devotions, especially to celebrations of the word of God.^[39]

V. Preparing Melodies For Vernacular Texts

- In preparing popular versions of those parts which be set to melodies, and especially of the Psalter, composers should take care that fidelity to the Latin text is suitably harmonized with applicability of the vernacular text to musical settings. The nature and laws of each language must be respected, and the peculiar features and special characteristics of each people must be taken into consideration; all this, together with the laws of sacred music, should be carefully considered by musicians in the preparation of the new melodies.

The competent territorial authority will therefore ensure that in the commission entrusted with the composition of versions for the people, there are experts in the subjects already mentioned as well as in Latin and the vernacular; from the outset of the work, they must combine their efforts.

- It will be for the competent territorial authority to decide whether certain vernacular texts set to music which have been handed down from former times, can in fact be used, even though they may not conform in all details with the legitimately approved versions of the liturgical texts.

- Among the melodies to be composed for the people's texts, those which belong to the priest and ministers are particularly important, whether they sing them alone, or whether they sing them together with the people, or whether they sing them in "dialogue" with the people. In composing these, musicians will consider whether the traditional melodies of the Latin liturgy, which are used for this purpose, can inspire the melody to be used for the same texts in the vernacular.

- New melodies to be used by the priests and ministers must be approved by the competent territorial authority.^[40]

- Those Episcopal Conferences whom it may concern will ensure that for one and the same language, used in different regions, there will be a single translation. It is also desirable that as far as possible, there should be one or more common melodies for the parts which concern the priest and ministers, and for the responses and acclamations of the people, so that the common participation of those who use the same language may be encouraged.

- Musicians will enter on this new work with the desire to continue that tradition which has furnished the Church, in her divine worship, with a truly abundant heritage. Let them examine the works of the past, their types and characteristics, but let them also pay careful attention to the new laws and requirements of the liturgy, so that "new forms may in some way grow organically from forms that already exist."^[41] and the new work will form a new part in the musical heritage of the Church, not unworthy of its past.

- The new melodies for the vernacular texts certainly need to undergo a period of experimentation in order that they may attain a sufficient maturity and perfection. However, anything done in churches, even if only for experimental purposes, which is unbecoming to the holiness of the place, the dignity of the liturgy and the devotion of the faithful, must be avoided.

- Adapting sacred music for those regions which possess a musical tradition of their own, especially mission areas,^[42] will require a very specialized preparation by the experts. It will be a question in fact of how to harmonize the sense of the sacred with the spirit, traditions and characteristic expressions proper to each of these peoples. Those who work in this field should have a sufficient knowledge both of the liturgy and musical tradition of the Church, and of the language, popular songs and other characteristic expressions of the people for whose benefit they are working.

VI. Sacred Instrumental Music

Sacred instruments can be very useful in sacred celebrations, whether they accompany the singing or whether they are played as solo instruments.

- "The pipe organ is to be held in high esteem in the Latin Church, since it is its traditional instrument, the sound of which can add a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lift up men's minds to God and higher things."

"The use of other instruments may also be admitted in divine worship, given the decision and consent of the competent territorial authority, provided that the instruments are suitable for sacred use, or can be adapted to it, that they are in keeping with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful."^[43]

- In permitting and using musical instruments, the culture and traditions of individual peoples must be taken into account. However, those instruments which are, by common opinion and use, suitable for secular music only, are to be altogether prohibited from every liturgical celebration and from popular devotions.^[44]

Any musical instrument permitted in divine worship should be used in such a way that it meets the needs of the liturgical celebration, and is in the interests both of the beauty of worship and the edification of the faithful.

- The use of musical instruments to accompany the singing can act as a support to the voices, render participation easier, and achieve a deeper union in the assembly. However, their sound should not so overwhelm the voices that it is difficult to make out the text; and when some part is proclaimed aloud by the priest or a minister by virtue of his role, they should be silent.

- In sung or said Masses, the organ, or other instrument legitimately admitted, can be used to accompany the singing of the choir and the people; it can also be played solo at the beginning before the priest reaches the altar, at the Offertory, at the Communion, and at the end of Mass.

The same rule, with the necessary adaptations, can be applied to other sacred celebrations.

- The playing of these same instruments as solos is not permitted in Advent, Lent, during the Sacred Triduum and in the Offices and Masses of the Dead.

- It is highly desirable that organists and other musicians should not possess the skill to play properly the instrument entrusted to them; they should also enter into and be thoroughly aware of the spirit of the liturgy, so that even when playing ex tempore, they will enrich the sacred celebration according to the true nature of each of its parts, and encourage the participation of the faithful.^[46]

VII. The Commissions Set Up For The Promotion Of Sacred Music

- The diocesan Commissions for sacred music are of most valuable assistance in promoting sacred music together with pastoral liturgical action in the diocese.

Therefore they should exist as far as possible in each diocese, and should unite their efforts with those of the liturgical Commission.

It will often be commendable for the two Commissions to be combined in one, and consist of persons who are expert in both subjects. In this way progress will be easier.

It is highly recommended that, where it appears to be more effective, several dioceses of the same region should set up a single Commission, which will establish a common plan of action and gather together their forces more fruitfully.

- The Liturgical Commission, to be set up by the Episcopal Conference as judged opportune^[46] should also be responsible for sacred music; it should therefore also consist of experts in this field. It is useful, however, for such a Commission to confer not only with the diocesan Commissions, but also with other societies which may be involved in musical activities in the same region. This also applies to the pastoral liturgical Institute mentioned in art. 44 of the Constitution.

In the audience held on 9 February, 1967 to His Eminence Arcadio M. Cardinal Laraona, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, His Holiness Pope Paul VI approved and confirmed the present Instruction by his authority, ordered it to be published and at the same time established that it should come into force on Pentecost Sunday 14 May, 1967.

Notes:

- Constitution on the Liturgy, Art. 112.
- Cf.