Laus Perennis: the emergence of a theology of music with reference to Post-Vatican II Irish Catholicism

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Abstract:

This work proposes the sourcing of a theology of music with particular reference to liturgical music developments in the Irish Catholic church since the Second Vatican Council. In doing so, it is confronted by two primary challenges: the complex relationship between music and liturgy and the equally complex historical relationship of Catholicism with Ireland. In order to address these challenges, the thesis adopts an interdisciplinary stance drawing on the disciplines of liturgical theology, philosophy and musicology, as well as more recent developments in anthropology, ethnomusicology, ritual studies, gender studies, performance studies and cultural studies. Chapter One postulates a theoretical and methodological framework built through the layering of four perspectives. The foundational layer is formed with reference to hermeneutic philosophy and key hermeneutic concepts such as 'rehabilitation of prejudice', 'fusion of horizons' and 'in front of the text' frame the structure of the thesis. The second layer draws on interpretive anthropology and theories of culture, symbol, ritual and performance. The third examines the developing discipline of ritual studies and its contribution to the cross-cultural study of ritual. Finally, liturgical theology provides an emic perspective on Catholicism's own attitudes towards its ritual expressions. The layering of these frames of reference provides the lens through which contemporary Irish Catholic liturgical music experience will be viewed. Chapter Two examines the historical precursors of the experience under review. It does so with reference to the changing historical relationship of music and liturgy, as well as the changing liturgical music fortunes of Catholicism in Ireland. Its primary focus involves the period immediately preceding the Second Vatican Council often referred to as the Modern Liturgical Movement. An analysis of this period in Irish history is approached through a review of the Glenstal Liturgical Congresses from 1954 to 1974. Chapter Three contains a review of the primary conciliar and post-conciliar documents related to the proposed liturgical reforms and their concomitant musical repercussions. It reviews the tensions surrounding both their formulation and reception, the growth of opposing camps representing 'liturgy' or 'music', and more recent attempts to heal this divide, even in the face of increased polarity. While the first three chapters provide the theoretical, methodological, historical and textual foundations of the work, Chapters Four and Five engage directly with the experience of implementation in Ireland in the four decades since the Second Vatican Council. It approaches the representation of this experience through a collage of sources. Chapter Four provides a review and analysis of implementation as articulated in five Irish journals or newsletters: The Furrow, Doctrine and Life, Hosanna, Jubilus and New Liturgy. Chapter Five presents the field interviews carried out for this thesis representing the voices of a spectrum of musicians, composers, liturgists and theologians involved in liturgy and liturgical music in Ireland. It also presents a survey of compositions written in Ireland since the Council. Chapters Six and Seven use both the foundational material of the first three chapters and the experiential material of Chapters Four and Five to propose a theological mandate for music in religious ritual expression. While this mandate is developed across a number of theoretical perspectives, it is grounded in the Irish experience. Chapter Six suggests that five theoretical motifs emerge as dominant in contemporary discussions of music in ritual. The first concerns the relationship of religion and art, while the second involves the relationship of both these concepts to culture. Contemporary understandings of music as symbol and liturgy as ritual also provide new perspectives on the music / liturgy divide. Viewing both music and liturgy as embodied experience opens up the worlds of performance and gender studies. Finally, all these perspectives are housed within contemporary perceptions of the postmodern condition. The chapter concludes that listening to these emerging voices allows for the proposal of a five-fold theological mandate for music. This mandate suggests music as a potent carrier of radical inclusiveness, the church's prophetic voice, the gift of creativity, the call to serve, and of the necessary expression of relational love. Chapter Seven concludes this thesis with the proposition that the Irish experience of music and liturgy has both unique contributions to make to the development of this mandate as well as unique needs, based on its own historical and cultural journey. It suggests that the breadth of Catholic ritual and musical expression is best grounded in the particulars of cultural stories and cultural communities and that the ability to frame one's own experience provides the strongest foundation for any truly catholic encounter.

Description:

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and that point which separates post-schism Catholicism from Augustine and the pre-schism Church in the West. When, later with Vatican II's re-evaluation of schismatics and heretics as "separated brethren," the Council will not only lift any such prohibition but even encourage limited intercommunion, then the "life of grace" will be seen as springing from the dissidents' liturgical life and prayer, a life which opens up access to the assembly of those being saved (Unitatis Redintegratio 3c). Nearly seven centuries of important modifications to Latin sacramental theology and ecclesiology would pass from the concise references of Thomas Aquinas to the "new vision" of the Church at Vatican II. When assessing the crisis produced in Irish Catholicism by the Vatican II era, Rafferty asks how deeply embedded Catholicism actually was in the Irish psyche. Whereas numbers attending Mass and religious services were extraordinarily high by any standards during the 1960s, the groups of men huddled outside the churches while their wives and children performed their liturgical duties, might indicate "a certain ecclesiastical conformism … rather than a deep hold of the Christian faith". Rafferty also questions why a country as deeply committed to Catholicism as Ireland has failed to produce a si... He speaks of a purification, adding that "the church has been chastened because of the sins of its leaders". Liberation theology is widely referred to in discussions of politics and religion but not always adequately understood. This Companion offers an introduc-tion to the history and characteristics of liberation theology in its various forms in different parts of the world. Authors from four continents examine the emergence and character of liberation theology in Latin America; Black and Feminist theologies; Asian theology; and the new situation arising from the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa. There is also an Introduction relating liberation theology to the history of theology, and a Select Bibliography. i. running head ii. Cambridge companions to religion. A series of companions to major topics and key gures in theology and religious studies.