

THE HIGH MASS WITHOUT CHOIR

Vatican II encourages very much singing in liturgical actions. But it is not always easy to have a properly trained choir at hand. Taking this into account, is it permissible to sing the parts usually sung by the priest, such as the Pater noster, etc., without having to sing the other parts that require a choir, such as Credo, Gloria, Introit, etc.?

Before Vatican II there existed a strict separation between sung or high Masses on the one hand and low Masses on the other, a distinction that is now, to a great extent, academic. Also in a low Mass one may sing the Kyrie, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. There is no longer any need for the choir to sing the Introit . . . , the Offertory and the Communion in High Mass. Instead of the Introit of the Missal a suitable hymn may be chosen, to be sung by the people, which either fits the part of the Mass, or the liturgical season, the respective feast or sacred mystery. The priest may even leave the selection of the hymn to the organist if he has the necessary training. Otherwise he is to consult the pastor. Thus during Advent a good seasonal hymn may take the place of the former Introit. In this case the text, now found or later on to be found in the reformed Missal is simply omitted. The same ruling applies to the Communion antiphon. The reformed Missal will not have an offertory antiphon at all. If no offertory hymn is sung, no textual substitute from the Missal is to be inserted.

For the singing of the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Agnus Dei (Ordinarium Missae) no choir is needed either. Even in a High Mass the Kyrie may become part of the third form of the penitential rite. If the priest decides that it should be sung in a High Mass, he may choose from among a number of different melodies that are already available in English, Tagalog or other local languages. One is also allowed to

sing the Kyrie in a paraphrase. The same holds true for the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. Among the different melodies of the Ordinary of the Mass on the market we may mention the "Alleluja Mass" and the "Jubilata Mass" of Fr. P. Brunner, SJ (East Asian Pastoral Institute), two Masses in Tagalog, one Misang Pilipino by Dom Maramba, OSB. These are examples, to which more could easily be added. Dom Maramba, OSB composed also the officially approved acclamations (*Dominus vobiscum*, etc.) both in English and in a number of local languages (including the Our Father). The priest may sing the presidential prayers in "tono recto," in the tune of Dom Maramba, OSB or in that found in the English Sacramentary.

The Credo is to be said or sung, preferably by priest and people together. Even in solemn celebrations it may be said, either in its Nicene or Apostolic form (*NOTITIAE* 3, 1967, p. 107).

Great freedom exists also for the rendering of the interlectionary chants. After the first reading, the responsorial psalm may be sung or recited with or without a response by the people. One may also choose to sing the responsorial psalm or the Alleluja-psalm of the Graduale simplex (cf. *Lit. Inform. Bull.*, March 1969), which is already available in an English translation.

In view of the foregoing it should be stressed that we need good hymns, both in their texts and melodies, for both the Ordinarium and Proprium of the Mass, especially for the vernacular languages of the country. It does not come as a surprise when the Instruction on the Gradual Application of the Apostolic Constitution "Missale Romanum" prescribes in art. 12: "It is for the episcopal conference to prepare a selection of vernacular texts, which may be used as entrance, offertory or communion songs. At the same time as it gives this approval, the episcopal conference will warmly encourage those competent in this field to increase and perfect this selection, taking into account the texts put forward in the new Missal and the special characteristics of each particular language." A similar encouragement is added in art. 18 of the same document for the responsorial psalms and the interlectionary chants in general.