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## Why do we sing the Mass?

Angela McCarthy

An important reason for singing is because Jesus did! As Matthew's gospel tells us, 'When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives' (26:30 NRSV). In his Jewish tradition much of their prayer was sung. Singing was evident in the early Church as we hear in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16; the gathered faithful are exhorted to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. This was in direct contrast to the Greco-Roman banquet behaviour which engaged in musical sobriety and careful social and gender role delineation.<sup>1</sup> Acts 16:23-25 speaks of Paul and Silas who were beaten and fastened by their feet in stocks yet singing while the other prisoners listened. In 1 Corinthians 14:26 there are instructions by Paul about what the faithful were to do when they gathered, and the first action is to sing a hymn. Paul also talks about fragments of the hymns that they sang, for example the beautiful hymn in Philippians 2:6-11 about Christ emptying himself; becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross. Psalms were also part of the sung practice following the Jewish tradition from which Christianity initially emerged.

... it seems likely that some forms of psalm singing already practiced in Judaism were known to Christians across the early centuries and that musical development in both traditions may have been spurred by interaction, as well as by initial Christian borrowing.<sup>2</sup>

Over the history of the Catholic liturgy there have been times when the congregation has been encouraged to sing and times when it has been left in the hands of a professional schola. With the legalisation of Christianity under Constantine 'the building of churches virtually exploded in the course of the fourth century'<sup>3</sup> with the music being left to the sacred ministers.<sup>4</sup> The development of scholas in Rome by the end of the seventh century resulted in 'the responsorial singing of the congregation at the eucharist' being 'largely replaced by choral singing.'<sup>5</sup> While there was variation throughout Christendom, there has still been a struggle to include the voice of the laity. Since the Second Vatican Council there has been strong encouragement for all participants to sing and it is an issue with which some congregations still struggle because it is rooted in culture.

In this era of COVID-19 and, for the Catholic Church in Australia, the Plenary Council 2020, the Church has been given an opportunity to look at things in a new light, to look at the ways in which liturgies can become more participatory and communal. One of the six themes of the Plenary Council is about discerning how the Church can become more prayerful and Eucharistic.<sup>6</sup> This involves the many different cultures that have been incorporated into the Church through migration and refugee needs. The Australian Church is now very diverse culturally, and therefore musically, and so any consideration around full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy<sup>7</sup> will need a holistic approach and a deep awareness of the role of the Holy Spirit in this era of change. The process so far has found that there are four areas that were 'discerned as major challenges for becoming a Christ-centred Church in Australia that is prayerful and Eucharistic: community, participation, formation and

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerAcademic, 2014), 113.

<sup>2</sup> McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 115.

<sup>3</sup> John F. Baldovin, "The Empire Baptized," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 78.

<sup>4</sup> Baldovin, "The Empire Baptized," 80.

<sup>5</sup> William T. Flynn, "Liturgical Music," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 771.

<sup>6</sup> Plenary Council 2020, *How is God Calling us to be a Christ-Centred Church in Australia that is Prayerful and Eucharistic?* (North Sydney: Plenary Council 2020, 2020), <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/themes/prayerful/>.

<sup>7</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," (1963).

[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html).

mission.<sup>8</sup> This article speaks clearly about these four areas as music helps to form community, increases participation, forms the community in belief and action, and sends them into the world.

In our contemporary world, the biblical roots of our liturgical practice are emphasised in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*<sup>9</sup> where it explains how Christ is truly present in the celebration of the Mass:

He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, 'the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross', but especially under the Eucharistic species. ... He is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. He is present, lastly, when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20).<sup>10</sup>

The human voice is a gift from God and Christ is present in the Church when it prays and sings!

### **A perspective from science**

There are other reasons for singing together too. Science demonstrates that music activates much more of the brain than talking. This can be seen in people who have dementia. They lose their ability to speak and form sentences, but they can still sing songs and remember the words and be stimulated to respond through sung communications.<sup>11</sup> Science also gives ample evidence of the value of singing in a group; it stimulates the feel-good hormones and helps people become a unified group.

A study of 84 members of a university college choir in England identified six dimensions of benefits associated with singing: benefits for well being and relaxation, breathing and posture; social benefits; spiritual benefits; emotional benefits; and benefits for heart and immune system.<sup>12</sup>

Becoming a unified group has been shown to have biopsychosocial benefits related to singing. Gick reviewed 48 studies that show that group singing increases health and immune system benefits and increases positive thoughts about self and community.<sup>13</sup> Other research found that singing may improve health and well-being psychologically by encouraging positivity. 'The elevated positive affect and hedonic feelings associated with group singing may lead to perception of greater well-being, which may also be tied into better mental health.'<sup>14</sup> The researchers found that 'one consistently reported consequence of singing is that choirs and singing groups develop a strong sense of belonging and encourage greater involvement in the community'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Plenary Council 2020, *How is God Calling us to be a Christ-Centred Church in Australia that is Prayerful and Eucharistic?*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1963).

<sup>10</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," para. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Lena Marmstål Hammar et al., "Communicating through caregiver singing during morning care situations in dementia care," *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences* 25, no. 1 (2010): 161, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6712.2010.00806.x>.

<sup>12</sup> Genevieve A. Dingle et al., "'To be heard': The social and mental health benefits of choir singing for disadvantaged adults," *Psychology of Music* 41, no. 4 (2012): 406, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1177/0305735611430081>.

<sup>13</sup> Mary L. Gick, "Singing, Health and Well-Being: A Health Psychologist's review," *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind & Brain* 21, no. 1 & 2 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1037h0094011>.

<sup>14</sup> Eiluned Pearce et al., "Is Group Singing Special? Health, Well-Being and Social Bonds in Community-Based Adult Education Classes," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 26 (2016): 519, <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2278>.

<sup>15</sup> Pearce et al., "Is Group Singing Special?," 520.

Another piece of research explored how singing could help young people with cystic fibrosis (CF), a disease of the lungs that can cause early death.<sup>16</sup> The research demonstrated that singing had a positive effect on people suffering CF and that while the particular exercise of singing is therapeutic for their lungs, the psychosocial effects were also beneficial. The above studies indicate that singing has health benefits for a wide range of people and as people of faith sing together in praise of God that has faith benefits as well.

Daniel Levitin, in his book *This is Your Brain on Music*, gives a fascinating understanding of what happens to the brain when engaged with music. He says that ‘music activity involves nearly every region of the brain that we know about, and nearly every neural subsystem’.<sup>17</sup> Even the smallest amount of music tuition as a child will develop neural pathways that assist the development of the brain and help to remember pitch. The Directory for Masses with Children, in the same understanding of the child’s affinity and need for music, emphasises the need for music in every liturgy involving children.

Singing must be given great importance in all celebrations, but it is to be especially encouraged in every way for Masses celebrated with children, in view of their special affinity for music. The culture of various peoples and the capabilities of the children present should be taken into account. If possible, the acclamations should be sung by the children rather than recited, especially the acclamations that form part of the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>18</sup>

Levitin explores the ancient nature of music and found that ‘musical instruments are among the oldest human made artifacts we have found... Music predates agriculture in the history of our species. We can say, conservatively, that there is no tangible evidence that language preceded music’ and that music and dance are inseparable.<sup>19</sup> Consider the nature of the lullaby and the mother-child focus. The mother knows that her child needs to settle and to sleep and so she reproduces sounds that echo the in-utero experience – soft, muted, replicating the regular and constant rhythm of the heart. The baby, comforted by these sounds, settles to sleep. Levitin considers how music and art have only become spectator activities in the last few centuries and the ties between music and movement have only been minimized in the last hundred years.<sup>20</sup> This minimization has effected our liturgical experience.

Has the reduction of music and movement in liturgy had an effect on the capacity of the People of God to engage in music? Movement, such as processions within the liturgy and within public life, are best accompanied by music because that is the natural combination for the human person. It would be difficult to imagine a bride and groom processing from the marriage liturgy without music. African cultures illustrate this very well with their combination of dynamic movement and music. In the Western tradition of singing hymnody, the preferred practice is to stand still; in chanting dialogues with the presider, people stand still. Music is an embodied act and forcing children to stand still is counter intuitive to their natural engagement in music and could be an underlying reason for the difficulty some adults have with singing in liturgy.

Previous centuries have witnessed the diminishment of the congregation’s participation in the musical experience by leaving it to experts and this is the experience certainly within the Catholic Church. The Protestant traditions did the reverse, they created music/hymnody that was integral to the nature of their communal worship. Removing the Roman/Latin emphasis on ritual that Calvin considered to be

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<sup>16</sup> J. Yoon Irons, Kathy Kuipers, and Peter Petocz, "Exploring the Health Benefits of Singing for Young People with Cystic Fibrosis," *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation* 20, no. 3 (2013): 144.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession* (London: Atlantic Books, 2006), 85-86.

<sup>18</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship, "Directory for Masses with Children," (1973): 30.

<http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/DocumentContents/Index/2/SubIndex/11/DocumentIndex/477>.

<sup>19</sup> Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 256.

<sup>20</sup> Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 257.

‘idolatrous’<sup>21</sup> allowed liturgical and musical reform and for the celebration to be in the vernacular. The ‘liturgical practice of the whole congregation singing together instilled a sense of praise and a harmony of purpose’.<sup>22</sup>

Jonathan Arnold, in his book *Sacred Music in Secular Society*,<sup>23</sup> examines the demand and effect of sacred music in the concert hall. He found that people who go to concerts of sacred music, in the most part from the Classical period, seek a transcendent experience. He says that ‘music is not just an art form that imparts pleasure’ but that, at its most profound can lead to an understanding of a greater truth to the world, beyond the material, which enhances the reality of existence and leads to a greater sense of what it means to be a human being.<sup>24</sup> This is the action of music in liturgy too but for Western society with the increase in secularism, the experience of the sacred is also sought outside the Church because the institutional experience is perhaps not fulfilling the need.

### **Why don’t we sing?**

Over the centuries, as mentioned previously, there have been times when the voice of the faithful was subordinated and only professionals allowed to sing. The voice of the people did remain in some areas until the twelfth century but ‘it is also clear that after the High Middle Ages there was only the most rudimentary role for the lay congregations’.<sup>25</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the laity were disaffected, but rather the musical practice of the Church changed to more elaborate musical offerings as ‘an anticipation of heavenly worship that required a richly articulated symbolic representation’.<sup>26</sup> The emphasis was on the eschatological view, not the humble needs of the people before God in the present moment. The term ‘High Mass’ was about the voices being high in pitch, chants in a high tone so that the people could hear and understand. The ‘old High Mass was meant to be a kind of medicine that invigorated people, reminded them of their uniqueness, and sent them refreshed but determined into a hostile world’.<sup>27</sup>

It is not hard to understand therefore why our liturgical communities still struggle to sing and still feel inadequate? Many people in our Australian culture had music lessons as a child but for most, that education did not continue beyond the basic level. As Levitin explains: ‘The chasm between musical experts and everyday musicians that has grown so wide in our culture [it] makes people feel discouraged, and for some reason this is uniquely so with music.’<sup>28</sup> When people open their mouths to sing they do not sound like the perfect recordings of music that they listen to every day and so their confidence to sing completely dries up.

### **Why we should sing**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century however, various popes worked hard to restore the singing voice of the people beginning in 1910 with Pope Pius X leading to a great renewal through the Second Vatican Council under the leadership of Saint John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. A groundswell that is described as the Liturgical Movement had been in evidence for nearly a century, led by monastic developments. This modern liturgical movement was a reform process that began at a pastoral level. It was led by people who wanted to rediscover the meaning of the liturgy and of the Church.

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<sup>21</sup> Flynn, "Liturgical Music," 780.

<sup>22</sup> Flynn, "Liturgical Music," 784.

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Arnold, *Sacred Music in Secular Society* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Arnold, *Sacred Music in Secular Society*, 111.

<sup>25</sup> Flynn, "Liturgical Music," 772.

<sup>26</sup> Flynn, "Liturgical Music," 773.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Day, *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 40.

<sup>28</sup> Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 194.

The Liturgical Movement or renewal belongs at the level of pastoral action. Its proponents have no authority to introduce changes or to alter liturgical rules, even if their research and their initiatives lead them to desire eventual reforms and to prepare the Christian communities to accept them.<sup>29</sup>

Fortunately, in the twentieth century the Liturgical Movement and liturgical reform were contemporaneous and 'in the best cases, mutually supportive'.<sup>30</sup> The Second Vatican Council was able to formalise and energise the reforms needed in the liturgy and other aspects of Church life. Among the themes that emerged from the first stages of the Plenary Council 2020, it became clear that this trend will continue because further reform is called for so that the Church can flourish. 'When we are formed in the Gospel, God's people recognise Jesus in daily life. At prayer and when celebrating the Eucharist, families, schools and parish communities encounter the living God together.'<sup>31</sup>

The way in which we celebrate the Mass is decided for us at the highest level of our Church structures. The document that is used the most is the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.<sup>32</sup> It says:

The Christian faithful who gather as one to await the Lord's coming are instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing together psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (*cf. Col 3:16*). Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (*cf. Acts 2:46*). Thus, St Augustine says rightly, 'Singing is for one who loves.' There is also the ancient proverb: 'One who sings well prays twice'.<sup>33</sup>

Great importance should therefore be attached to the use of singing in the celebration of the Mass, with due consideration for the culture of the people and abilities of each liturgical assembly. ... every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people not be absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and on holy days of obligation.<sup>34</sup>

Maeve Heaney speaks of music as theology.<sup>35</sup> Theology is about seeking to understand, through faith, who God is and developing our relationship with God. Music is a way in which we embody our prayer as community and in the embodiment of our sung prayer we can experience God. Fine musicians can read a score in their heads but it only really makes sense if the music becomes sound, becomes embodied. That is how it has its impact. Music is theology because it is a 'means by which we can listen to and receive the Word of God'.<sup>36</sup>

The ancient motto, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, ties our prayer to belief and therefore our liturgy is not separate from our doctrine or our theology. This can be extended further to include the understanding that what we sing we not only believe, we remember it. Do you remember songs from when you were a child? Remember singing particular hymns? Do you remember last Sunday's homily? When we sing we repeat, but we also activate much more of the brain, and our whole selves and therefore our belief enters more deeply into our memory and therefore our being.

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<sup>29</sup> André Haquin, "The Liturgical Movement and Catholic Ritual Revision," in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, ed. Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 696.

<sup>30</sup> Haquin, "The Liturgical Movement," 696.

<sup>31</sup> Plenary Council 2020, *How is God Calling us to be a Christ-Centred Church in Australia that is Prayerful and Eucharistic?*, 12.

<sup>32</sup> Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, "The General Instruction of the Roman Missal," (2007).

<https://www.catholic.org.au/commission-documents/bishops-commission-for-liturgy-1/164-vatican-approves-general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal-for-australia-1/file>.

<sup>33</sup> Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, "GIRM," para 39.

<sup>34</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," 40.

<sup>35</sup> Maeve Louise Heaney, *Music as Theology* (Pickwick Publication, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Heaney, *Music as Theology*, 134.

## When do we sing at Mass?

Musicam Sacram says: progressive solemnity means that ‘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.’<sup>37</sup> At times this seems to be poorly understood. The more solemn the occasion for the liturgy, the more is required to be sung. The table below from Paul Mason clearly shows the various times within liturgy where singing is either required or appropriate. It becomes clear that the acclamations and dialogues are more important than the processional hymns for the beginning and end of Mass; the psalm and gospel acclamation should be sung in the Liturgy of the Word.

Liturgy as an action of the people calls us all to sing as is required by the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*: ‘The faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy’.<sup>38</sup> This is further echoed in the document from the USA, *Sing to the Lord*: ‘Singing is one of the primary ways that the assembly of the faithful participates actively in the Liturgy’.<sup>39</sup>

## What should we sing?

Singing within a community as an enculturation into faith will build the capacity to sing confidently and remember the musical patterns. This points to two important issues within the establishment of a parish repertoire. There needs to be repetition of music over long periods of time and the development of music for the children of the parish must be carefully nurtured and intentional.

Science has discovered that the schema or familiar pattern of a piece of music is important for our acceptance of it, whether we like it or not. ‘Music, or any art form for that matter, has to strike the right balance between simplicity and complexity in order for us to like it... we find a piece too simple when we find it trivially predictable, similar to something we have experienced before, and without the slightest challenge.’<sup>40</sup> For young children, however, repetition is necessary as it provides a predictable way for them to respond, and the response together as they sing reinforces their capacity to contribute. It also develops the neural paths in their brains that gives them the tools for more complex responses as they mature.

Repetition remains invaluable for its capacity to transmit faith through the text that we can remember through the melody and the context in which it is learnt and experienced. During the liturgy we sing biblical texts in acclamations and dialogues which encapsulate theological truths of our faith. As Levitin explains:

The multiple reinforcing cues of a good song – rhythm, melody, contour – cause music to stick in our heads. That is the reason that many ancient myths, epics, and even the Old Testament were set to music in preparation for being passed down by oral tradition across the generations. As a tool for activation of specific thought, music is not as good as language. As a tool for arousing feelings and emotions, music is better than language. The

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<sup>37</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Musicam Sacram: Instruction on Music in the Liturgy," (5 March 1967). [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_instr\\_19670305\\_musicam-sacram\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_instr_19670305_musicam-sacram_en.html).

<sup>38</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," 14.

<sup>39</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship," (November 14 2007): 26. <https://www.yakimadiocese.org/pdf/SingToTheLord.pdf>. STL is an excellent document that refines the directives for liturgical music very well.

<sup>40</sup> Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 235.



combination of the two – as best exemplified in a love song – is the best courtship display of all.<sup>41</sup>

It is clear that this applies to everyone, not only to trained musicians. ‘Music that involves too many chord changes, or unfamiliar structure, can lead many listeners straight to the nearest exit, or to the ‘skip’ button on their music players. ...At a neural level, we need to be able to find a few landmarks in order to invoke a cognitive schema.’<sup>42</sup> Liturgical music needs to have a level of complexity that satisfies the need for an attractive schema, but also sufficient predictability to ease the engagement with the music in specific cultural settings. Multicultural parishes in Australia therefore need a diversity of music to be attractive to diverse ethnic groups.

For clearly defined information on what we should sing much valuable material has been written over more than five decades since Vatican II. A recent work by Dr Paul Mason of Wollongong examines the Vatican II document *Musicam Sacram*.<sup>43</sup> Mason notes that *Musicam Sacram*<sup>44</sup> ‘highlights the need to balance the priority and amount of singing demanded by the solemnity of the occasion against pastoral considerations for the singing capabilities of the priest, the choir, the cantor and the assembly.’<sup>45</sup> His matrix of priorities for singing lists the liturgical parts that are most important as declared by *Musicam Sacram*. Mason further develops his examination of this document to give a detailed pastoral guide for the music to be used within Mass. The full article is available from the Australian Journal of Liturgy:

[https://australianacademyofliturgy.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/australian-journal-of-liturgy-2017-v15-n4\\_web.pdf](https://australianacademyofliturgy.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/australian-journal-of-liturgy-2017-v15-n4_web.pdf)

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<sup>41</sup> Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 267.

<sup>42</sup> Levitin, *This is Your Brain on Music*, 237.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Mason, "Musicam Sacram 50 Years On: A gift That Keeps On Giving (Part 1)," *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 15, no. 3 (2017). Paul Mason, "Musicam Sacram 50 Years On: A Gift That Keeps On Giving (Part II)," *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 15, no. 4 (2017).

<sup>44</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Musicam Sacram."

<sup>45</sup> Mason, "Musicam Sacram 50 Years On Part II," 223.

<b>Musicam Sacram Matrix of Priorities for Singing</b>					
<b>Intrinsic musicality (MS 6)</b>		by their very nature require to be sung		Recitative chant (Cantillation)	
<b>intrinsic importance (MS 7)</b>		Greater	Lesser	Greater	Lesser
<b>Diversity of forms (MS 16) &amp; Degrees of Participation (MS 28-36)</b>		Star Rating Guide to Priority reflects the priority of diversity of forms.			
<b>First degree</b>		★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★	☆
acclamations and responses	entrance rites			the greeting of the priest and the reply of the people; the prayer.	
	Liturgy of the Word	<i>Alleluia</i>		the acclamations before and after the Gospel	
	Eucharistic Liturgy	the <i>Sanctus</i> ; the final doxology of the Canon	the Lord's Prayer with its introduction and embolism	the prayer over the offerings; the preface with its dialogue; the <i>Pax Domini</i> ; the prayer after the Communion; the formulas of dismissal.	
<b>Second degree</b>		★★★★☆	★★★	★☆	-
prayers of litany form and hymns		<i>Gloria</i> (people participating); <i>Agnus Dei. Kyrie</i>	<i>Gloria</i> (choir only)	Prayer of the Faithful	Creed
<b>Third degree</b>		★★★★	★★☆	★	
refrains or repeated responses, antiphons and psalms, and canticles	Special importance +	Songs after the Lesson or Epistle ( <i>Gradual</i> or Responsorial Psalm);			
		songs at the Entrance and Communion procession (people participating)	Entrance (choir only); Communion (choir only); song at the Offertory; song at the end of Mass	Readings of Scripture	

## **Conclusion**

In this period of COVID-19, many issues surrounding liturgy will possibly be redefined in worshipping communities. During 2020 access to liturgy and sacraments has been withdrawn for varying lengths of time in Australian states. Singing has been seen to be dangerous for the community spread of the virus and some parish communities banned the congregation from singing. And yet, throughout time singing has been an integral way of humans interacting in community and building strong relationships as well as promoting their own health. The post-COVID future is unknown but sung music is necessary to the experience of liturgy in order to be full, conscious and active participants. This article has noted the scientific as well as the liturgical reasons for sung music but how we manage that in healthy ways is yet to be seen. As the Church prays and sing together in different ways, we can learn more about what our faith desires and how much we would like to sing together. It is hoped that the worshipping community can therefore lift their voices to God and become one in the Body of Christ, able to go into the troubled world and make a difference. The Plenary Council 2020/21 will have much to consider in regard to the liturgical life of the Church.