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## PASTORAL MUSIC MEMO

To: Pastoral Musicians

From: Charlie Gardner

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**The NPM National Convention** will take place in Detroit from July 12 to 16. Check out the practical hands-on workshops, inspiring major addresses, festive sung liturgies, high-quality musical performances, exhibits, showcases, and much more!

NPM members can register through the Indianapolis Chapter by May 14 for \$248:

<http://archindy.org/worship/files/NPM%20Detroit%20Convention%202010.pdf>,

or online by June 5 for \$275: [View complete convention information](#)

Complete information about the **2009 NPM summer institutes** is available at the [NPM website](#). Three-day Cantor Express Institutes will be held in St. Louis and near Columbus, Ohio, and five-day Choir and Ensemble Institutes will be held in the Cincinnati area. Member discounts are extended to anyone from NPM member parishes. Plan now for the continuing formation of music ministers from your parish, school, or other community.

**Rensselaer Program of Church Music and Liturgy** – June 27 to July 30, 2010 – Masters Degree or continuing education program at St. Joseph College in summers-only format. More information at <http://www.saintjoe.edu/academics/liturgy/>

**St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota** will present a conference entitled: "New Music, New Texts: Preparing for a New Missal" from June 21 to 24. More information at <http://www1.csbsju.edu/sot/events/CollegevilleConference.htm>.

**St. Andrew Church in Indianapolis is seeking a part-time Coordinator of Music Ministries** to be responsible for the effective preparation, coordination, performance, and leadership of music within the liturgical celebrations of the parish. The position requires proficiency in keyboard accompaniment of diverse styles, including gospel, contemporary and traditional music and a strong knowledge of Roman Catholic liturgy.

Further information is available at [www.standrewindy.org](http://www.standrewindy.org) or by calling 317-546-1571.

## **Strophic Hymns in *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship***

I am presently serving on the editorial committee for the next revision of *Worship Hymnal*. One of its features will be the inclusion of specific hymns for each of Gospels in the 3-year Sunday Lectionary. Here is what *Sing to the Lord* has to say about strophic hymns at Mass:

Congregational hymns...that have been judged appropriate by the competent authorities...may be admitted to the Sacred Liturgy. Church legislation today permits as an option the use of vernacular hymns at the Entrance, Preparation of the Gifts, Communion, and Recessional. Because these popular hymns are fulfilling a properly liturgical role, it is especially important that they be appropriate to the liturgical action. In accord with an uninterrupted history of nearly five centuries, nothing prevents the use of some congregational hymns coming from other Christian traditions, provided that their texts are in conformity with Catholic teaching and they are appropriate to the Catholic Liturgy. (STL 115d)

Care must be taken in the treatment of the texts of psalms, hymns and songs in the Liturgy. Verses and stanzas should not be omitted arbitrarily in ways that risk distorting their content. While not all musical pieces require that all verses or stanzas be sung, verses should be omitted only if the text to be sung forms a coherent whole. (STL 143)

**Entrance** – Many think that this is the best place to sing a strophic hymn. But if this is done, the caution mentioned above must be taken seriously. The full text of the hymn should normally be completed even if the ministers have already reached their places.

**Preparation of the Gifts** – In some cases, this might be the best place to sing a song based on the Gospel reading just proclaimed. Also, if a collection is being taken, there is usually more time available to sing all of the stanzas of the hymn so that its full content can be experienced. Ideally, there should be some time allowed after the song before the Prayer over the Gifts.

If the choir alone sings during this time, another possibility might be to occasionally sing a hymn with a text based on the Gospel reading immediately after the homily as suggested by Joseph Gelineau in his book, *Liturgical Assembly, Liturgical Song* (Pastoral Press). This hymn could stand on its own and could “enable the assembly to appropriate and deepen the biblical message of the day.” (p. 158).

**Communion** – The Communion Procession does not normally lend itself to the strophic hymn form. A responsorial song or psalm better lends itself to the flow and flexibility of this part of the Mass.

**Hymn after Communion** – Although not specifically mentioned in STL 115, it is covered later in the document:

When the distribution of Communion is finished...a psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may be sung by the entire congregation. [It] should focus the assembly on the mystery of the Holy Communion in which it participates, and it should never draw undue attention to the choir or other musicians. The congregation may stand for the song after Communion if the nature of the music seems to call for it. (STL 196)

Even though singing a strophic hymn after Communion is not a common practice, it does provide an opportunity to experience a complete hymn “standing on its own” instead of accompanying another action.

**Recessional** – This song is not an official part of the concluding rite, but most communities have come to expect one—perhaps because they sense that something more is needed to help send them forth to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. However, since the Mass has officially ended, it may not always be appropriate to sing all the stanzas of a strophic hymn. Hymns with refrains work well for the Recessional, since they often can be shortened without distorting their content. Some hymns such as “All Creature of Our God and King” or “For All the Saints” have enough stanzas to be divided and used for both the Entrance and the Recessional at the same Mass.