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Judith M. Kubicki

# Images of Church in Classic Hymnody

Liturgy is integrally linked to the nature of the Church. This assertion suggests a vital connection between the way the Church defines and interprets itself at any given time and the style and substance of its official prayer. It affirms the fact that through its ritual prayer, the Church simultaneously expresses its self-understanding and contributes to shaping that self-understanding.[1] Thus, while ecclesiology may be said to have serious consequences for ritual praxis, the converse is also true.

My purpose is to highlight the link between liturgy and ecclesiology by focusing on one particular ritual action, the singing of hymns on the topic of Church. By doing so, I hope to uncover its potential for shaping and expressing a worshiping assembly's self-understanding as Church. The images of Church in three traditional hymns will be examined in order to discover the expressed ecclesiology of the texts, the implied ecclesiology that might be interpreted in the text revisions, and the implicit ecclesiology of the action of singing these hymns. One post-Vatican II hymn will also be examined for its particular images of Church. Comparisons will be made between the traditional and post–Vatican II texts.

## THE ECCLESIAL NATURE OF THE LITURGY

In its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Second Vatican Council affirmed the fact that the liturgy is an ecclesial action when it said that "it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church."[2] Commenting on the

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[1] Miriam Therese Winter, *Why Sing? Toward a Theology of Catholic Church Music* (Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press 1984) 59.

[2] Austin Flannery, gen. ed., "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1984) #2.



Second Vatican Council's presentation of the liturgy as the action of the Church, Yves Congar pointed out that this was a retrieval of an ancient tradition which held that the "ecclesia," the Christian community, is the subject of the liturgical action.[3] Furthermore, the revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM 2002) reaffirms these insights when it begins article 19 by quoting SC 41: "The presence and active participation of the faithful bring out more plainly the ecclesial nature of the celebration."[4]

As the subject of the liturgical action, the assembly expresses its beliefs, values, commitments, relationships, memories and hopes which constitute it as a community. And while the assembly communicates its message, the Church is being mediated, since liturgical assemblies are particular realizations of the Church.[5] All of these comments point to the social nature of the liturgy, since ritual is produced within the ecclesial process, is performed by an assembly, and participates in the ongoing life of the Church, a social reality.[6]

As the hymn-text writer Brian Wren so aptly put it ". . . when a congregation sings together, its song is an acted parable[7] of community. In the act of singing, the members not only support one another, but proclaim a community of faith reaching beyond the congregation that sings. Thus, the corporate inclusiveness of congregational song is *ecclesial*: it declares what the church aims and hopes to be, and reminds the singers of their common faith and hope."[8]

[3] Margaret Mary Kelleher, "Liturgy: An Ecclesial Act of Meaning," *Worship* 59 (November 1985) 482.

[4] *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2002).

[5] Ibid., 491, 493.

[6] Yves M. J. Congar, "L'Ecclesia ou communauté chrétienne, sujet integral de l'action liturgique," in *La Liturgie après Vatican II*, ed. J. P. Jossua and Y. Congar (Paris: Cerf 1967) 241.

[7] The phrase, "parable of community" was also used by Roger Schutz to describe the monastic community he founded inTaizé, France. See Judith Marie Kubicki, *Liturgical Music as Ritual Symbol: A Case Study of Jacques Berthier's Taizé Music* (Leuven: Peeters 1999) for further discussion of the relationship of Taizé chants and the ecclesiology of the community.

[8] Brian Wren, *Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 2000) 93.

Communication is an essential component of the life of any social group. The Church likewise has its own language or set of symbols through which its particular meanings are communicated. Knowledge and use of the Church's public language is a sign of membership in the Church. The Bible, as well as hymns, creeds, preaching, and personal testimony are all significant forms of language for the Christian Church, allowing it to discover and express its social identity.[9] Even in the early days of the liturgical movement that preceded Vatican II, such great leaders as Dom Prosper Guéranger understood the true nature of symbol as something having inevitable social consequences. He knew that both symbol and ritual have everything to do with social formation, cohesion, and survival.[10]

The language of the liturgy is symbolic. This is so because its basic units are ritual symbols: objects, actions, relationships, words, music, gestures and arrangements of space.[11] Because it can be said to have many layers of meaning, a symbol is both illusive and multi-valent. Clusters of symbols in motion constitute ritual. Several Church documents make reference to the power of symbols in the liturgy, specifically to the power of music-making as symbolizing activity. In *Music in Catholic Worship*, the United States bishops' first official commentary on liturgical music following Vatican II, they say this about the variety of symbols found in the liturgy: "Among the many signs and symbols used in the Church to celebrate its faith, music is of preeminent importance. As sacred song united to words it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy. . . . It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively . . . [and] It imparts a sense of unity to

[9] Margaret Mary Kelleher, "Liturgy as an Ecclesial Act of Meaning: Foundations and Methodological Consequences for a Liturgical Spirituality," (Ph.D. Diss., The Catholic University of America 1983) 74–75.

[10] Aidan Kavanagh, "Beyond Words and Concerts to the Survival of Mrs Murphy," *Pastoral Music* 77 (April–May 1977) 17.

[11] Margaret Mary Kelleher, "Liturgical Theology: A Task and a Method," in *Worship* 62 (January 1988) 11. See also Judith M. Kubicki, *The Presence of Christ in the Gathered Assembly* (New York: Continuum 2006) 60–88.



the congregation."[12] The bishops continue: "In addition to expressing texts, music can also unveil a dimension of meaning and feeling, a communication of ideas and intuitions which words alone cannot yield. This dimension is integral to the human personality and to growth in faith. It cannot be ignored if the signs of worship are to speak to the whole person."[13]

In their latest document on music, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, the bishops refer to the role of symbols to proclaim Christ's presence in the Church by quoting from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. That document speaks of the sacramental principle that believes the words, gestures, signs, and symbols used in the liturgy express God's gesture toward humanity and humanity's response.[14]

In this way we can say that music wedded to text in the liturgy serves as a preeminent symbol capable of shaping and expressing the faith of the assembly. In other words, this process contributes to the spiritual formation of the assembly. Don Saliers is keenly aware of this power of sung prayer when he writes: "Musical choices take us either toward or away from such deep patterns of emotion which constitute the Christian life, the 'Christ-formed' life, if you will. Church music is thus integral to proclaiming and receiving the word and the mystery of the saving reality of the gospel. This is why questions of sung prayer are really questions of congregational spirituality. Over time the community of worship will be shaped by its musical language and forms, for good or for ill. We must be sensitive to this, and to the problems and the opportunities this presents us in thinking through the whole program of parish music."[15]

Indeed, if this be so, the choices which we make week by week and year by year, concerning the sung prayer which we invite our assemblies to perform, are not insignificant. Rather, we need to

[12] Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship* (Washington, DC: USCC Publications Office 1972) #23.

[13] Ibid., #24.

[14] Committee on Divine Worship, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* (Washington, DC: USCCB 2008) #6. See also, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana — USCCB 2000) #1146, 1148.

[15] Don Saliers, "The Integrity of Sung Prayer," *Worship* 55 (July 1981) 294.

recognize their power, over time, to shape the spirituality and inform the theology of our people.

This raises some fundamental questions, then, in regard to ecclesiology. Just what kind of Church is being disclosed and expressed in our liturgical celebrations? What kind of information with regard to their identity is being presented to the assembly in their ritual celebrations? What are they learning about themselves, about God, about Jesus Christ, about salvation, about life in an ecclesial community? What image of Church is being mediated through ritual?[16] And more specifically, how do the hymns which we place on their lips each week help them to better experience and understand what it means to be Church? These questions can be more concretely addressed by considering the use of specific hymns on the topic of Church.

### SINGING HYMNS AS AN ECCLESIAL ACT OF MEANING

We will begin by examining three traditional hymns for the ecclesiology which they express: "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation," "O Christ the Great Foundation," and "At That First Eucharist." Regarding the texts themselves, our method will consist of examining each hymn for imagery or metaphors of the Church, as well as for doctrinal or creedal expressions. Original and revised versions of the texts will be compared. To a limited extent, the context in which the hymns are sung will also be examined. For not only is the text of sung prayer a powerful symbol capable of shaping and expressing the Church, but it is a symbol which, as part of ritual, is experienced in motion, that is, in the context of real human beings singing during worship. For it is within the actual performance of the liturgy that meaning is communicated and created by and for the Church; it is the actual performance of the rite by an assembly that determines which meanings appear.[17] As Victor Turner points out in his studies on ritual, "[T]exts not only animate and are animated by contexts but are processually inseverable from them."[18] The poet, the artist, and the musician

[16] Kelleher, "Liturgical Theology," 18.

[17] Kelleher, "Liturgy: An Ecclesial Act," 490.

[18] Victor Turner, "Process, System, and Symbol: A New Anthropological Synthesis," *Daedalus* 106 (1977) 61.



have an insight into this. The Church, as a cluster of New Testament images, is indeed of the nature of poetry, of song, and of dance.[19]

In addition to situating hymns within the liturgical context, their placement in specific topical categories within a hymnal reveals an implicit ecclesiology operative in the choices of the hymnal's editors. The hymnal, *Worship*,[20] for example, gives thirty-one titles under the topic of "Church." The three hymns under consideration in this paper are all included. At the conclusion of the list of hymns under the topic "Church," cross-references send the reader to topics listed as "discipleship," "ministry," "mission," and "social concern." Referring to these topics is in itself significant since it implicitly suggests that discipleship, ministry, mission, and social concern are somehow directly related to the topic "Church." Interestingly enough, all of these topics coincide with an understanding of the Church which Avery Cardinal Dulles refers to as the model of Church as servant.[21] This designation reveals a dramatic change of focus in the Church's own self-understanding which occurred at the time of Vatican II, and which finds its articulation in the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," (*Gaudium et spes*). Of the three hymns, only "O Christ the Great Foundation" is found in the cross-references and it is found in each one of them. Thus even in the simple act of setting up a topic index, the hymnal editors make a number of ecclesiological statements, supporting as they do by their general design, an ecclesiology consonant with the statements on Church issued by the Second Vatican Council.

In terms of musical style, the three texts are often set to traditionally constructed hymn tunes. This is the case, for example, in *Worship*. The tunes of "O Christ the Great Foundation" (tune: AURELIA) and "At That First Eucharist" (tune: UNDE ET MEMORES) are written in simple meter (four four or common

[19] George H. Tavard, *The Church, Community of Salvation: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology*, New Theological Studies I, gen. ed. Peter C. Phan (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1992) 93.

[20] *Worship: A Hymnal and Service Book for Roman Catholics*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc. 1986). The limits of this article require that renditions of the three traditional hymn texts in contemporary usage be limited to one or two hymnals.

[21] Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expanded edition (New York: Image Books, a division of Doubleday and Co., Inc. 2002) 81–94.

time). This creates a solid sense of rhythm in a processional or marching style with subdivisions of the beat into two. The music for "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation" (tune: WESTMINSTER ABBEY) is written in compound meter (six four time), providing a more flowing sense of rhythm because the beat subdivides into three rather than into two. In any case, the regular shape of the phrases of each hymn tune, as well as the recurring rhythmic and melodic motifs, creates a strong and clear melody that invites confident participation. This is significant because in most cases these hymns are sung by the entire congregation when they are standing or walking. "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation" and "O Christ the Great Foundation" serve well as gathering (entrance) or recessional hymns. "At That First Eucharist" is perhaps most often chosen as a communion processional. Two of these three liturgical moments — the gathering song and the communion song — play a critical role in creating and sustaining an awareness of community.[22] It is important, then, that the genre of music chosen be capable of enabling the assembly to participate easily and wholeheartedly. Keeping these general observations on the three hymns in mind, let us proceed to a more detailed analysis of the text of each.

### "CHRIST IS MADE THE SURE FOUNDATION"[23]

The text of this hymn, "Angularis fundamentum" ("Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"), is an eleventh-century Latin hymn that some scholars suspect may go back as far as the sixth century.[24] Actually, the text as it is most frequently used today is the second part of a much longer hymn entitled "Urbs beata Jerusalem" (Blessed City, Heavenly Jerusalem). Dividing this hymn after stanza four goes back to medieval liturgical custom.[25] In practice,

[22] *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2002) #46 and #86. See also, Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Music in Catholic Worship* (Washington, DC: USCC Publications Office 1972) #60.

[23] See appendix A for a Latin and an English translation of the original text and a copy of the revised texts as published in *Worship* in 1986 and *RitualSong* in 1996.

[24] Eric Routley, *An English-Speaking Hymnal Guide* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1979) 109.

[25] Eric Routley, *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1979) 68.



each section ended with a doxology that appeared as verse five and verse ten. Modern hymnals offer different combinations of verses, some printing all nine. Many use only the second part, "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation," which is the subject of our consideration here. In *Worship*, the text is set to the tune WESTMINSTER ABBEY, an adaptation of a seventeenth-century anthem by Henry Purcell. In *RitualSong*,[26] a version of the text closer to the original is set to a new hymn tune, EDEN.

The text of the hymn, by the well-known nineteenth-century hymn-text translator John M. Neale, contains many concrete images for the Christian Church. These include "foundation," "corner-stone," "temple," and "Sion." They suggest security, strength, protection, and dependability. *Lumen gentium* discusses the long tradition of using these images to describe the Church and points to their roots in Sacred Scripture: "Often, too, the church is called God's *building* (see 1 Cor 3:9). The Lord compared himself to the stone which the builders rejected, but which was made into the cornerstone (see Matt 21:42 and parallels; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet 2:7; Ps 117:22). On this foundation the Church is built by the apostles (see 1 Cor 3:11) and from this it receives stability and cohesion. This edifice is given various names: the house of God (see 1 Tim 3:15) in which his family lives; the household of God in the Spirit (see Eph 2:19-22); 'the dwelling-place of God among mortals' (Apoc 21:3); and, especially, the holy *temple*. This temple, represented in sanctuaries built of stone, is praised by the Fathers and is rightly compared in the liturgy to the holy city, the new Jerusalem. As living stones we here on earth are built into it (1 Pet 2:5). It is this holy city which John contemplates as it comes down out of heaven from God when the world is made anew, 'prepared like a bride adorned for her husband' (Apoc. 21: 1f.)."[27]

In addition to the imagery contained in the text, there are also significant creedal statements. The last two lines of stanza two profess faith in a God who is both one and triune. This is reaffirmed in

[26] *RitualSong: A Hymnal and Service Book for Roman Catholics* (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc. 1996, 1998).

[27] Austin Flannery, gen. ed., "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations; A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language* (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company 1996) #6.

the doxology in the last stanza which mentions each person of the Blessed Trinity separately and then reiterates belief that they are three in one. In addition, the last verse of the original text closes the doxology by professing the three persons of the Trinity "consubstantial and co-eternal."

Thus, strong images of the Church as "building" and "city" are intertwined with creedal statements which proclaim that the Church's faith is its source of unity. This faith, furthermore, is built on Christ on whom it depends as its "sure foundation." The third verse portrays the Church in the traditional role of Church "militant," striving to achieve beatitude after a time of struggle.

The revised text of this hymn, as it appears in *Worship*, is also attributed to the translator John M. Neale, but with several alterations. It includes only three verses and a number of changes in the use of imagery and creedal statements. There are fewer images and they are less homogeneous. Although Zion is mentioned, the words "city" and "wall" are not included. The image of "head" in verse one, line two, did not appear in Neale's original translation. Perhaps Pius XII's encyclical, "*Mystici corporis*," (1943) may have influenced this insertion in the *Worship* version.[28] The subject of that papal document was the notion of Church as mystical body, with Christ as head of the body. This addition works to broaden the richness of the imagery by introducing a new metaphor. Likewise, the mention of "grace" in the third verse of the *Worship* text supports the imagery of Christ as "Head" and thus further develops the notion of Church as mystical communion. In this way, the new translation appears to move from an understanding of Church that focuses strongly on the institutional model, to one that includes the notion of mystical communion.

G.I.A., the same company that published *Worship* in 1986, published *RitualSong* ten years later. "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation" appears in this hymnal as well, but this time the editors returned to much of the original text that was altered in 1986. The 1996 hymn contains four verses rather than three, the first two of which are identical to the 1986 edition. The interesting changes occur in verses 3 and 4. Here verses revert back to verses four and

[28] *Worship II*, published by G.I.A. in 1975 already had the insertion of the word "Head" in the first verse.



five of the original with a few alterations. Archaic language such as "thy" is dropped, but "vouchsafe" returns in 1996 after having been replaced in 1986 by "grant." Technical theological terms such as "consubstantial" and "co-eternal" are not retained, but the less familiar "laud" is. In terms of church imagery, key images such as foundation, cornerstone, Zion, and temple are retained. The eschatological dimension of the original fourth verse is re-instated as is the doxology in the final verse.

Creedal statements regarding the afterlife and the three-in-one nature of God are stronger than the 1986 text and clearer than the original nineteenth-century translation. At least one of the effects of these changes is to create a text that speaks of Church in more explicitly eschatological and trinitarian terms. On the other hand, the changes also revive the use of language that is not common parlance outside the context of worship, e.g., "vouchsafe" and "laud."

### "THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION"[29]

Hymnologists consider this hymn to be one of the most theologically substantial of all the Victorian hymns. It was written by Samuel John Stone when he was a young priest reacting to the Colenso controversy.[30] Gradually it became a universal hymn of celebration for great church occasions. Since, within the author's lifetime those occasions became more frequent and the processions longer, Stone inflated the text to eleven verses. However, as the additional verses never fitted the original text properly in the first place, they have appropriately fallen away.[31]

Samuel John Stone first published the hymn in his *Lyra Fidelium* in 1866. The text has been consistently set to the tune AURELIA by Samuel S. Wesley which was, however, originally composed for another hymn text entitled "Jerusalem the Golden."[32] The text is

[29] See the appendix for the 1866 version of the text and a copy of the text published in *Worship*.

[30] The Colenso controversy was a heresy-hunt in the Church of England which concerned removing a South African bishop from his see for saying that Moses did not write Deuteronomy because it contains an account of his own funeral.

[31] Routley, *Panorama*, 95.

[32] W. H. Frere, ed., *Hymns Ancient and Modern: Historical Edition* (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited 1909) 494.

rich in imagery and theology. In addition to beginning with the image of "foundation," the first verse includes such baptismal images as "new creation" and "water." Further images such as "Word," "Bride," and "buying" are all contained in the first seven lines.

Although the second verse contains images such as "charter," "food," and "grace," the creedal notions of unity predominate with seven repetitions of the word "one" in the space of the eight-line verse. Notions of Church as institution (charter) are juxtaposed with notions of Church as mystical communion (grace), as well as Church as sacrament. Strong language characterizes the third verse. Such vivid images as "oppression," "rending asunder," "watching," "night," "crying out," weeping," and "mourning" describe an experience of the Church torn apart by heresy. The fourth verse begins by depicting the Church Militant with more abstract metaphors such as "toil," "tribulation," "war," "peace," "victory," and "rest." As the verse develops, the eschatological notion of the Church comes through in lines three, four, and five with the verbs "waiting" and "longing." The stanza closes with a picture of the Church Triumphant gazing at the vision glorious. The final verse comes back to notions of unity and mystical communion, based again on faith in the God who is Three in One. The ultimate goal of the Christian life is expressed through such images as "unity," "rest," "happiness," "grace," and "dwelling on high."

*Worship* attributes its version of the text to Timothy T'ingfang Lew. It would seem that he is responsible for the very significant reworking of the text. Indeed, the strongest link between the two is the use of the same hymn tune. The five verses of the original have been conflated into four. The general focus in terms of imagery and creedal statements is similar, but there are clear changes of emphasis. Instead of the simple mention of "Word" in the first verse, the revised text speaks of preaching salvation. And although the Holy Spirit was implicit in the activity described in the original verse, there is an explicit invocation to the Holy Spirit in the revised text. The traditional image of Church as "bride" is omitted[33] and the new text lacks the strong relational quality of the original.

[35] The use of the image "bride" was beginning to be viewed as "sexist" at the time when many denominations were revising their hymnals in the 1970s and



There seems to be a stronger leaning toward an understanding of Church as herald in the second text. This idea is reiterated at the end of the second verse when it again speaks of making the Lord known.

The third verse uses military imagery as did the original, but this time the Church is not fighting heresy, but the evil powers of oppression. Images such as "tyrants," "weak," "innocents," and "ramparts," provide a certain power to the verse as does the use of such strong verbs as "tightened," "devour," "frightened," "awaking," and "breaking."

The final verse again pictures the Church as the herald of Christ's lordship and of the future kingdom. Neither a doxology nor creedal statements about the Trinity are included. Rather, the images of "champion," "head," "kingdom," and "glory" recapitulate the metaphors of the entire text. Clearly the hymn is rich in multiple images that correspond to the various models of the Church as Avery Dulles[34] outlines them. The revised (some might argue, the new) text holds up the importance of keeping the faith unbroken (verse one), but de-emphasizes the role of the Church as battling heresy. Instead, the Church is portrayed as one that devotes its energy to preaching and righting wrong — this time social ills.

### "AT THAT FIRST EUCHARIST"[35]

William H. Turton composed the text of this hymn in 1881 at St Mary Magdalen, Munster Square in London for the English Church Union. The first line of the original text began "O Thou who at thy Eucharist didst pray." It was first published in the *Altar Hymnal* in 1884. Later, the opening line was altered to read "Thou who at thy first . . ." when it was included in the 1889 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. Later, it was again altered to begin "At that first Eucharist. . . ."[36]

1980s. See Gracia Grendel, "Inclusive Language in Hymns: A Reappraisal" in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 60 (June 1989) 187–93.

[34] See note 21.

[35] See appendix for three different versions of this text. The first is the original published in 1881, the second is a version published in 1959, and the third is the text published in *Worship* in 1986.

[36] Routley, *Hymnal Guide*, 70.

From the beginning, the text was set to the tune UNDE ET MEMORES, although that tune was actually first used with a hymn text beginning "And now, O Father, mindful of the love. . . ." William H. Monk composed the tune for inclusion in the 1875 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* which he edited.

The primary focus of this hymn is different from the previous two in that the Eucharist, rather than the Church, is its primary focus. Whereas the previous hymns might be sung during the entrance processional or the recessional, this hymn is usually designated as a hymn for the communion processional. In both *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and *Worship*, the hymn is listed as a song for Eucharist. This indeed works well since the imagery of the hymn characterizes the Church as mystical communion and sacrament.

The 1881 text includes the scriptural images of "one bread, one body" (1 Cor 11:17) in the first two verses. Unity is the primary focus. The third verse moves into the scriptural imagery of the Church as "sheepfold" with Christ the "Good Shepherd." Faith is characterized as an ancient tradition preserved by the Church. Finally, in the last verse, the unity of the Church is associated with the unity of the Trinity when, in the end, the Church Militant will be joined with the Church Triumphant.

In addition to comparing the original text of the hymn and the version found in *Worship*, an intermediary version of the text was published in *Our Parish Prays and Sings*,[37] at the time when the dialogue Mass was being promoted just before the Second Vatican Council. The inclusion of this text of Protestant origin is significant and perhaps even surprising because it occurs in a Roman Catholic hymnal before the Second Vatican Council was convened. The text preserves the characterization of Church as sacrament of unity. It also includes the shepherd imagery. However, some alterations should be noted. Instead of "longing with heart and soul" that God's will be done, Christians are asking that the Lord renew in their hearts the "law of love." This highlighting of love is followed through in the second verse where, instead of praying that "our sad divisions cease," — presumably the divisions caused by heresy or schism — Christians are praying that their "lack of charity may

[37] *Our Parish Prays and Sings: Dialogue Mass, Hymns, Chants* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press 1959) 61–62.



cease." Nevertheless, unity remains the underlying motif and the Eucharist is celebrated as *the* sacrament of unity. The final verse of the hymn is retained as it was published in the 1881 version.

The *Worship* version of this hymn follows the rendering of the text as published in the 1959 hymnal with one exception. Whereas *Our Parish Prays and Sings* includes the fourth verse of the hymn intact, *Worship* drops the last verse. The verse is eschatological, looking forward as it does to the final age when sacraments themselves will cease to exist. It includes a creedal statement on the Trinity and so concludes with the traditional ending to Christian prayer. Omitting that verse leaves the *Worship* version unfinished or incomplete at best. Without acknowledging eschatological fulfillment, the text fails to affirm that indeed sacraments and the Church itself are a means while on the journey, but not the final resting place.

### "SING A NEW CHURCH"

In addition to the revisions of classic texts, the period following the Second Vatican Council witnessed a resurgence of hymn writing. One hymn that appears both to have caught the imagination of local churches in Roman Catholic communities (and to have incited some controversy) is a text by Delores Dufner O.S.B., set to the tune NETTLETON. The text was composed in 1991. NETTLETON is a popular American hymn tune in 87 87 D meter in three four time. It first appears in *Repository of Sacred Music* published by John Wyeth in 1813.

"Sing a New Church" was originally published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP)[38] and now is also included in *Gather Comprehensive*, 2nd edition[39] published by G.I.A. Dufner composed the text at the request of the National Association of Pastoral Ministers (NPM) for the Pittsburgh Convention in 1991. For worship at the convention, the text was set to a tune by composer Peter Jones. Nevertheless, even as she was creating the text, Dufner imagined it sung to the tune NETTLETON. So for the hymn fest scheduled

[38] Since 1991 "Sing a New Church" has appeared regularly in the annual editions of the *Music Issue* and *Breaking Bread*, both published by OCP. However, it was not included in the 2003 edition of *Journeysongs*, 2nd edition.

[39] *Gather Comprehensive*, 2nd edition (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications, Inc. 2004).

during that same convention, "Sing a New Church" was sung to NETTLETON at Dufner's request. She believed that NETTLETON communicated a sense of vitality, resilience, and strong commitment that suited her text. It had the additional benefit of being familiar.

Since Dufner's text was created after the Second Vatican Council, it is not surprising that its images of Church are different from those we have looked at earlier in this paper. Nevertheless, they are rooted firmly in the tradition. A brief review of the primary images in the three hymns already analyzed will serve as an introduction to the differences in the Dufner text.

"Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation" includes images of corner stone, foundation, and building in its original version. The twentieth-century revision adds the image of Christ as "head" and mentions "grace" in that context. The new version thus moves from a more institutional model to one that includes images of mystical communion. "The Church's One Foundation" is rich in multiple images that correspond to several models of the Church as outlined by Avery Dulles. The revision moves away from focusing on the Church's role in fighting heresy to its role as preacher and righter of social ills. "At That First Eucharist" makes the Eucharist rather than Church its primary focus. Unity is the underlying motif and Eucharist is celebrated as *the* sacrament of unity. Images of Church as mystical communion and sacrament are present both in the original and the revisions. However, the final revision drops the eschatological theme as it is expressed in the final verse.

"Sing a New Church" does not explicitly employ traditional images or models of the Church. The primary metaphor for Church is, in fact, an entity created not out of bricks and stone (foundation), but through the action of singing. The Church is thus portrayed more as a verb than as a noun since it exists as the singing People of God more than a building or city. Perhaps this text at least partially inspired the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops to use this image in their latest document, "Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship," in this way: "God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person, in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises."[40]

[40] Committee on Divine Worship, *Sing to the Lord*, #1.



Immediately after this article, the bishops speak more directly of the role of singing in worship: "Music is therefore a sign of God's love for us and of our love for him. In this sense, it is very personal. But unless music sounds, it is not music, and whenever it sounds, it is accessible to others. By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people."[41] The article claims, and rightly so, that singing together, not only *in* church, but *as* Church, is an action that possesses sacramental power, a power it possesses because it is symbolizing activity.

While "singing" is the primary metaphor for church, this action verb is part of a larger array of strong verbs in the Dufner text. The presence of these strong verbs gives the text an energy that is not easy to replicate with nouns or even adjectives. Some of the verbs are passive since they describe God's action on the Church: "summoned," "gathered," "robed." The first two describe our call to be Church and the third makes reference to baptism, our initiation into the Church. Other verbs include the call to "bring" gifts, "trust," "dream," "weave," and "sound." There is a play on the alternating experiences of diversity and unity, varied and one, maleness and femaleness. Other, more traditional images include water, light, and seed. The image of weaving a song brings two dimensions together, sight and sound, tapestry and music. The movement of the text finally reaches its climax when the singing draws everyone together at the one table, characterizing the Church as a circle that encompasses all the human family.

This energy and activity depicts the Church as dynamic rather than static. It is what enables Dufner to describe the Church as "new." It is a breathing, growing body of people, living in the Spirit. The eschatological vision she poetically depicts echoes the language of the Book of Revelation (21:1-5a) when it declares: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see

[41] Committee on Divine Worship, *Sing to the Lord*, #2.

this city? Here God lives among mortals. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.' Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new' he said."

The church that sings this song and what is described in this text is itself a part of this prophetic vision. The Spirit continually makes all things new so that in the final eschatological consummation of all things, rising from the waters of baptism and robed in God's light, the entire human family, seated at the final banquet, will truly be one and free.

## OBSERVATIONS

Although it would be impossible to make generalizations regarding hymnody on the topic of Church from the small sampling included here, still there are some significant observations that may be made concerning the materials studied. First, the singing of hymns by the assembly is part of the ritual activity that constitutes them as Church. Second, hymnody on the topic of Church is a venerable and ancient tradition in the Church. Third, those hymns that have been an important part of that tradition draw their inspiration both from Scripture and from the Church's professions of faith. Fourth, questions of dogma or shifts of emphasis in theology are reflected in hymn texts and the editorial decisions of hymnal publishers. Fifth, those hymns that possess the richest imagery and reflect a variety of images for Church provide for a broader usage and versatility. Finally, that very variety and versatility signals the fact that no one image or symbol has the power to capture the nature of the Church in its totality.

We are, in the final analysis, caught up in symbols and images set in motion within ritual activity — symbols and images that are essentially open. As cited above, the closing chapters of the Book of Revelation set out the nature and structure of the Church in images of the New Jerusalem. Its poetry escapes the categories of any single theological system or legislative code. For both rational speculation and law reach their limit before the openness of images. Indeed, past and present images birth forth new images into



the future. The reality is that trying to capture mystery in images can never be fully achieved.[42] What we, as Church, can only hope to do in the face of this mystery is to continue to sing. In this way, we offer our humble but confident assent with a resounding, sung "Amen!"

## APPENDIX
## "CHRIST IS MADE THE SURE FOUNDATION"

**11th century (7th)**
**(Angularis fundamentum; second half of Urbs Beata Hierusalem)**

Christ is made the sure foundation
and the precious corner-stone,
who the twofold wall surmounting
binds them closely into one:
holy Sion's help for ever
and her confidence alone.

All that dedicated city
dearly loved by God on high,
in exultant jubilation
pours perpetual melody;
God the One and God the Trinal
singing everlastingly.

To this temple, where we call thee,
Come, O Lord of hosts, today!
With thy wonted loving kindness
hear thy people as they pray;
and thy fullest benediction
shed within its walls for ay.

Here vouchsafe to all thy servants
that they supplicate to gain:
here to have and hold for ever
those good things their prayers obtain;
and hereafter in thy glory
with thy blessed ones to reign.

**Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation**
**Worship text #617 (1986)**

Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone;
Chosen of the Lord, and precious,
Binding all the Church in one;
Holy Zion's help forever,
And her confidence alone.

To this temple where we call you,
Come, O Lord of hosts, today;
With your wonted loving kindness
Hear your servants as they pray,
And your fullest benediction
Shed in all its bright array.

Grant, we pray, to all your people,
All the grace they ask to gain;
What they gain from you for ever
With the blessed to retain,
And hereafter in your glory
Evermore with you to reign.

**Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation**
**RitualSong, #778 (1996)**
Verse 1: same as 1986 text above
Verse 2: same as 1986 text above

Here vouchsafe to all your servants
What they ask of you to gain;

[42] Tavard, *The Church*, 93.

Laud and honour to the Father,
laud and honour to the Son;
laud and honour to the Spirit;
ever three and ever one:
consubstantial, co-eternal,
while unending ages run.

**1866 The Church's One Foundation**

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her,
To be His holy Bride;
With His own Blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth,
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy Food,
And to one hope she presses
With every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distrest,
Yet Saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil, and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
What they gain from you for ever
With the blessed to retain,
And hereafter in your glory
Evermore with you to reign.

Laud and honor to the Father,
Laud and honor to the Son,
Laud and honor to the Spirit,
Ever three and ever One,
One in might and One in glory,
While unending ages run.

**1986 O Christ the Great Foundation**

O Christ the Great Foundation
On which your people stand
To preach your true salvation
In ev'ry age and land:
Pour out your Holy Spirit
To make us strong and pure,
To keep the faith unbroken
As long as worlds endure.

Baptized in one confession,
One church in all the earth,
We bear our Lord's impression,
The sign of second birth:
One holy people gathered
In love beyond our own,
By grace we were invited,
By grace we make you known.

Where tyrants' hold is tightened,
Where strong devour the weak,
Where innocents are frightened
The righteous fear to speak,
There let your church awaking
Attack the pow'rs of sin
And, all their ramparts breaking,
With you the victory win.

This is the moment glorious
When he who once was dead
Shall lead his church victorious,



Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O happy one and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee. Amen.

**O Thou Who at Thy Eucharist Didst Pray (1881)**

O Thou who at thy Eucharist didst pray,
That all thy Church might be forever one,
Grant us at every Eucharist to say
With longing heart and soul, 'Thy will be done:'
O may we all one Bread, one Body be,
Through this blest Sacrament of unity.

For all thy Church, O Lord, we intercede;
Make all our sad divisions soon to cease;
Draw us the nearer each to each we plead,
By drawing all to thee, O Prince of Peace.
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,
Through this blest Sacrament of unity.

We pray thee too for wanderers from thy fold;
O bring them back, Good Shepherd of the sheep,
Back to the faith which saints believed of old,
Back to the Church which still that faith doth keep.
Soon may we all one Bread, one Body be,
Through this blest Sacrament of unity.

Their champion and their head.
The Lord of all creation
His heav'nly kingdom brings
The final consummation.
The glory of all things.

**At That First Eucharist (1959: verses 1-4) (1986: verses 1-3)**

At that first Eucharist before you died,
O Lord, you prayed that all be one in you;
At this our Eucharist again preside,
And in our hearts your law of love renew.
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be;
Through this blest Sacrament of Unity.

For all your church, O Lord, we intercede;
O make our lack of charity to cease;
Draw us the nearer each to each we plead,
By drawing all to you, O Prince of Peace.
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be;
Through this blest Sacrament of Unity.

We pray for those who wander from the fold;
O bring them back, Good Shepherd of the sheep,
Back to the Faith which saints believed of old,
Back to the church which still that Faith does keep.
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,
Through this blest Sacrament of Unity.

So, Lord, at length when sacraments shall
cease,
May we be one with all thy Church above,
One with thy saints in one unbroken peace,
One with thy saints in one unbounded love:
More blessed still, in peace and love to be,
One with the Trinity in Unity.

So, Lord, at length when Sacraments shall
cease,
May we be one with all your Church above,
One with your saints in one unending peace,
One with Your saints in one unbounded
love.
Thus may we all one Bread, one Body be,
Through this blest Sacrament of Unity.

"Sing a New Church"
*Gather* (2004)
Text: Sr. Delores Dufner O.S.B. 1991
Tune: NETTLETON 1813
Summoned by the God who made us
Rich in our diversity,
Gathered in the name of Jesus,
Richer still in unity:

*Refrain:*
*Let us bring the gifts that differ*
*And, in splendid, varied ways,*
*Sing a new church into being,*
*One in faith and love and praise.*

Radiant risen from the water;
Robed in holiness and light,
Male and female in God's image,
Male and female, God's delight; Ref.

Trust the goodness of creation;
Trust the Spirit strong within.
Dare to dream the vision promised
Sprung from seed of what has been. Ref.

Bring the hopes of ev'ry nation;
Bring the art of ev'ry race.
Weave a song of peace and justice:
Let it sound through time and space. Ref.

Draw together at one table
All the human family;
Shape a circle ever wider
And a people ever free. Ref.

Judith M. Kubicki



Nathan D. Mitchell

## The Amen Corne

THE FUTURE PRESENT

What makes a place sacred? Activity? Thought? Vision? Faith? Prayer? Light? Sound? The gathering of a crowd? Extrasensory phenomena? Think back, for a moment, to late August of 1997, when Diana, Princess of Wales, died. All over London, all over the world, people quickly, instinctively, created sacred memorial spaces — plots of flowers, cards and stuffed animals that recalled this young woman's life and work. For a brief time, the world rediscovered the pull and power of "sacred space." The same thing happens in virtually every city and small town across America when a child dies as a result of violence or a cop is killed in the line of duty. People instinctively *mark* that place, cover it with icons and graffiti, transform it into a garden of memory.

In this column, I want to focus first on some of the ways Jews and Christians have tried to determine what makes space sacred, cultic, liturgical. As we shall see, this search for sacred space is inseparable from larger questions about how God is present to people and places. In Israel's experience, there was considerable tension and conflict between the claims of God's freedom and sovereignty and the claims of God's accessibility and presence. Israel had come to believe, after all, in a uniquely single, celibate God without consort or offspring — a God who both "comes" and "abides." God's "coming" is often preemptive, raucous, raw, rude, intrusive, disruptive — unwelcome, perhaps, and unexpected, but finally irresistible. Whatever the situation may be, God's "coming" changes it decisively. But such sovereign divine freedom was tempered by Israel's conviction that God "dwells" and "abides" in specific places, among specific people — that God's "face" can be *seen* in *sanctuaries*. Thus the anonymous poet of Psalm 63 prays,

> O God, you are my God, for you I long;
> for you my soul is thirsting.
> My body pines for you
> like a dry, weary land without water.