

Bilingual Music In A Liturgical & Multicultural Environment

By: Maria Socorro Muñoz



Revelation 7:9-10

After this I had a vision of a great multitude which no one could count from every nation, race, people and tongue standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb."

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my presentation is to share the importance of including bilingual music at mass, not only on Sundays, but major celebrations as well. Music itself goes beyond words and rhythm. It touches the deepest parts of our hearts and souls when we gather as an assembly to worship our Lord.

Bilingual music is a channel which fosters unity among our diverse community and facilitates the active and full participation of the assembly. We need to remember that we are servants called by our Lord to catechize, evangelize, and to lead the assembly as a whole. They are the main choir and this allows us to worship our Lord together with the saints in Heaven.

PASTORAL MUSIC MINISTRY

A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP & SERVICE IN LOVE, COMPASSION, SOLIDARITY & HOSPITALITY

SUGGESTIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPROACH:

UNITY IN CHRIST: What are we doing to identify the diverse members in our parish and see them as Christ sees them? Not as strangers but as brothers and sisters made in God's image.

UNITY IN PRAYER: When we choose music, we are called to pray and reflect on the Gospel and on the readings of that particular Sunday. We must ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in selecting the music. This will not only change and open our hearts, but of our brothers and sisters within the assembly.

UNITY IN HOSPITALITY AND SOLIDARITY: We are called to be intentional and actively select music that facilitates the full and active participation of the diverse members in the assembly.

UNITY IN MISSION: Our mission is to leave the banquet of our Lord energized by his Word through praise and by receiving sacred communion. Our call as Christians Catholics is to become what we receive and reflect on the resurrected Christ. We do this by reaching out to the needs of others, especially those who do not speak our language and to the ones who are in the outskirts of our community.

INVITATION: Identify the diverse members in your parish and connect with them. When people feel welcomed and valued, they participate. Some of them might not join the choir, but they will find ways of getting involved by using other gifts that God gave them. If you are incorporating a song from their culture, they can help others with the pronunciation of the words of the hymnal.

UNITY IN PARTICIPATION AND IN COLLABORATION: Collaboration fosters unity and integration. Participation without collaboration brings frustration, disharmony and division. Collaboration requires personal sacrifice in regards to likes and dislikes. It is very important to consider that when it comes to prepare a bilingual or multicultural celebrations. Plan it **WITH** them not **FOR** them. We are called to come together in a inclusive way that will be beneficial for the entire assembly.

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES



In order to be successful in implementing bilingual music, we need to be aware of some obstacles and challenges that we are called to overcome.

WE ARE CALLED TO BUILD BRIDGES OF HOSPITALITY & SOLIDARITY:

When we strive to build bridges, many times we are discouraged by members who are closed minded and refuse to go beyond their comfort zone in order to come together and worship as one body in Christ. This leads to segregation within our parish, which goes against sharing the Gospel.

FEAR AND FRUSTRATION: Fear of what others may think can prevent us even before we begin to plan the music within a bilingual or multicultural liturgy. Many times, we are afraid of disapproval from the pastor, choir members, or the reaction of the assembly. In the end, the rejection we experience is based on misunderstanding, lack of formation and lack of wanting change.

DISCOURAGEMENT: Lack of dialog and collaboration begins to affect our pastoral sensitivity within our ministry.

INDIFFERENCE: We become indifferent when we fail to overcome these negative and divisive emotions for the heavenly banquet. This banquet is for us to fully and actively participate as one body of Christ.

HOPE AND TRUST IN GOD: With God everything is possible. Music has the power to heal, evangelize, and to transform lives. Bilingual music accomplishes that in a more unified way because it serves as a bridge where God is the main architect that fosters unity among our diverse assembly along with our priest at our Lord's table.

Every liturgy is an opportunity to relive our Pentecost Sunday



*And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues ...
Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem
each one heard them speaking in his own language...Acts 2:1-8*

Our Diocese Mission statement is Reconcile, Make Disciples, and Live the Mission. My prayer and hope is that with the support of our Bishop and priests, our diocese can begin to implement not only bilingual music, but complete bilingual liturgies during special celebrations like Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Advent, and Christ Mass Christmas.

“My hope is that our diocese changes from being a mission diocese to becoming a diocese with a mission.” – Bishop Grus, Priority Plan for our diocese.

May God guide us with his Spirit, so we can do our ministry according to His will. To be faithful disciples who are called to build up his temple united as one body in Christ.

May our blessed Mother Mary, Mother of The Eucharist intercede for us and cover us under her mantle. Amen.

Maria Socorro Muñoz

SUGGESTIONS FOR PLANNING BILINGUAL MASS

1. First and foremost enculturation and formation programs are essential in a diverse parish for liturgy committees, choir directors and music ministers. This will assist in having the proper knowledge to be able to plan bilingual Liturgies according to the suggestions of the Liturgy documents approved by the USCCB.
2. Choose songs with a short refrain that are easy to learn.
3. Invite members of the culture present in your parish to join your choir or to help you with the pronunciation of their language.
4. Choose songs that are known by the English speaking assembly
5. Get together perhaps once a month or quarterly to study the liturgical resources in regards to the importance of bilingual music in the liturgy.
6. Get together with other choirs to build friendships and invite them to participate in bilingual celebrations.

LIST OF BILINGUAL SONGS MORE COMMON IN BOTH LANGUAGES

1. ADVENT: O Come O Come Emmanuel
2. CHRISTMAS: Silent Night. / Noche De Paz
3. LENT: Were You There / Presenciaste tu La Muerte Del Señor?
4. EASTER: Christ Our Lord Is Risen Today / El Señor Resucitó
5. PENTECOST: Veni Sancte Spiritus / Ven Santo Espiritus
7. FUNERALS: Amazing Grace / Sublime Gracia
8. WEDDINGS: If I Do Not Have Love / Si Yo No Tengo Amor
9. OFFERTORY: Come To The Feast / Ven Al Banquete.
10. COMMUNION: Amen El Cuerpo De Cristo / Amen The Body Of Christ
11. RECESSIONAL: Vayan Al Mundo / Go Out To The World.

REFERANCES FROM THE LITURGY DOCUMENTS

VOLUME ONE, FORTH EDITION

186. *Let all Christ faithful participate in the Most Holy Eucharist as fully, consciously and actively as they can, honoring it lovingly by their devotion and the manner of their life.* Let the Bishops, Priest and Deacons, in the exercise of the sacred ministry, examine their consciences as regards the authenticity and fidelity of the actions they have performed in the name of Christ and the Church in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

Let each one of the sacred ministers ask himself, even with severity whether he has respected the rights of the lay members of Christ's faithful, who confidently entrust themselves and their children to him, relying on him to fulfill for the faithful those sacred functions that the Church intends to carry out in celebrating the sacred Liturgy at Christ's command. For each one should remember that he is a servant of the Sacred Liturgy.

[Ecclesia de Eucharistia / Redemptionis Sacramentum.]

[Eucharistic Documentum For The New Millennium.]

63. The Entire worshipping assembly exercises a ministry of music. Some members of the community, however, are recognized for the special gifts they exhibit in learning the musical praise and thanksgiving of Christian assemblies. These are the pastoral musicians, whose ministry is especially cherished by the Church.

64. What motivates the pastoral musician? Why does he or she give so much time and effort to the service of the Church at prayer? The only answer can be that the Church musician is first a disciple and then a minister.

The musician belongs first of all the assembly; he or she is a worshiper above all. Like any member of the assembly, The pastoral musician needs to be a believer, needs to experience conversion, needs to hear the Gospel and so proclaim the praise of God.

Thus the pastoral musician in not merely an employee or volunteer. He or she in a minister, someone who shares faith, serves the community, and expresses the love of God and neighbor through music.

66. Clergy and musicians should strive for mutual respect and cooperation in the achievement of their common goals.

PASTORAL PLANNING FOR CELEBRATION

Music in Catholic worship

The planning team or committee is headed by the priest celebrant or homilist for no congregation can experience the richness of a unified celebration if that unity is not grasped by the one who presides as well by those who have special roles.

The planning should include those with knowledge and artistic skills needed in celebration men and women train in music poetry and familiar with current resources in this area. Music chosen with care can serve as a bridge to faith as well as an expression of it.

6. Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebration may weaken and destroy it.

(*“The Liturgy Documents Volume one”*)

DIVERSE CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

58. Emigrants should be welcomed and should be provided with the resources they need to worship in their own language, however, as the second generation of immigrant group comes to maturity in the worship assembly *bilingual* (native language and English) resources and songs are needed to promote participation of the multicultural and intergenerational assembly.

As Dioceses, parishes and neighborhoods become increasingly diverse, the different cultural groups strive for some expression of unity in a spirit of hospitality local worshiping communities are encouraged to develop bicultural or multicultural celebrations, from time to time that reflect the changing face of the church in America.

60 Liturgical music today must reflect the multicultural diversity and intercultural relationships of the members of the gathered liturgical assembly bilingual or multicultural repertoire can assist in weaving the diverse languages and ethnicities of the liturgical assembly into a tapestry of sung praise.