

## Summary notes from Fr. James Kurzynski

- **The project:** Analyze new Mass settings of the revised text of the Roman Missal.
- **The Goal:** Recommend, from each of the three major publishing houses (GIA, OCP, and World Library), quality Mass settings that would be accessible to as many of our parishes as possible. The settings should have accessible melodies, based on sound music theory, proper use of text, and a fittingness for the Eucharistic Liturgy.

### (FAQ) Answering questions raised at regional meetings (Sparta, Wausau, Altoona):

*Are the recommendations made in this project to be the only Mass settings parishes can use?*

- No. Bishop Callahan has been clear that the final decision on music will be left to the parish. However, it is the hope of the Office of Divine Worship that these recommendations will be given serious consideration.

*Is the Diocese trying to force parishes to use more Latin (and Greek) through this project?*

- No. It is important to remember the project is focusing on the revision done to the Roman Missal's English text. Therefore, there are no Latin music settings that were looked at as a part of this project. Some of the settings have minimal insertions of Greek and Latin (the *Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei* for example), but none of the recommendations would approach being a Latin only text. That being said, Gregorian Chant is, as it has always been, an indispensable part of the Church's music tradition and is fitting for use in the celebration of the Eucharist.

*How many Mass settings have been analyzed?*

- To date, I (Fr. James Kurzynski) have analyzed well over 100 Mass settings from numerous publishing houses. I did a preliminary run-through and then selected about 20 settings that seemed to stand out. From there, I reviewed settings, analyzed them with the participants of the regional music conferences, and finally went through them with a trusted organist from our Diocese before making my final recommendations.

*Why didn't you include any revised versions of Mass settings already in use (Mass of Creation, Mass of Light, etc.)?*

- Two Reasons:
  - The current Mass settings are already known. Parishes have made their decisions on which settings to use and not to use. Therefore, to revisit these settings would be redundant.
  - There are many who speculate the revised settings will be short lived. The tension between the original music and the revised text will lead to dissatisfaction with the revised Mass settings. The end result will be that parishes will begin to explore the new Mass settings.

Therefore, this project only focuses on new Mass setting, anticipating this shift away from the revised settings.

*Do I (Fr. James Kurzynski) have any personal bias for or against any of the big three publishing houses (OCP, GIA, or World Library)?*

- No. I have no personal sentiment, contractual ties, or obligations to any of the publishing houses mentioned above. I, myself, do compose, but have been published by a local, independent publishing house with no connection to OCP, GIA, and World Library. Most of the recommendations I am making are from OCP, but this should not be interpreted as a personal loyalty to the publishing house, but merely an acknowledgement that the settings that fit the criteria for this project were most commonly found in settings from OCP. All three publishing houses are represented in my recommendations and have fine Mass settings to choose from.

### **Recommendations:**

*Settings that are flexible enough for all parishes*

- ***Mass of St. Frances Cabrini***

- The Mass of St. Frances Cabrini is a work by Kevin Keil from OCP. The melodies are written in a comfortable range and are quite singable. For larger parishes with choirs, there are lush voice parts to add to the settings beauty. For smaller parishes, the setting is not dependent upon complex instrumentation and the organ part is simple enough for most organists. Stylistically, it fits well with all liturgical seasons.

- ***Mass of Wisdom***

- The Mass of Wisdom is a work by Stephen Janco from World Library Publications (JS Paluch). It is written with two instrument settings: traditional (with organ and hand bells) and contemporary (piano, woodwinds, and guitar). The two settings display the work's flexibility for parishes of differing music abilities. The melodies are quite lyrical, but do get a little "note-y" from time to time. Of interest in this setting are the tones for the General Intercessions. They are very simple and, with the right cantor, would enhance the prayerfulness of the celebration of the Eucharist.

- ***Mass for a Servant Church***

- The Mass for a Servant Church is a work by Michel Guimont from GIA. This is a setting I was hesitant about recommending. My hesitation is not about its musicality; it has some wonderful musical moments. However, it is a setting that is quite complex musically and may test an organist's and laity's abilities. It is a marvelous setting for large celebrations in a Church like the Cathedral or a big parish with good acoustics. This is not a setting I would recommend for smaller parishes. Therefore, I offer this as a recommendation for its wonderful music writing, but offer reservations due to its lofty style.

*Mass settings for parishes that are looking for plain song, vernacular chant:*

- ***Music of the new Roman Missal.***

- The music of the Roman Missal is an improvement over our previous Roman Missal. For the most part, it avoids the trap of trying to force an English text into a melody meant for a Latin text (being they are adaptations of the typical Latin melodies). A clear example of where the text and melody do fight each other is in the Sanctus. The music setting places the emphasis on the second syllable of the word “holy.” Linguistically, the natural emphasis of the word “holy” is on the first syllable.

- ***The Belmont Mass***

- The Belmont Mass is a work by Christopher Walker from OCP. It comes with a basic organ accompaniment, but the music is by no means dependent upon it. At the regional conferences, most parishioners thought this would be a good setting for smaller, rural parishes with limited music resources. The melodies are easy and can be learned quickly. Once learned, all that would be needed to invite a congregation into song would be a cantor. However, this does not mean that larger parishes would not see value in this setting. It was a universally held opinion of those attending our regional meetings that this setting cannot stand as the only setting used by a parish. Its simplicity is its strength, but overuse may lead to boredom. It would be best to use this setting in conjunction with other settings to provide an appropriate variety of music selections.

*Mass setting for parishes looking for contemporary or “Youth Mass” music:*

- ***Mass of Renewal***

- The Mass of Renewal is a work by Curtis Stephan of OCP. Its melodies are very singable and easy to learn. The chord structures give it a mild *Praise and Worship* feel without going overboard. When done with voice and piano, it sounds as if it would work with most parishes in the Diocese. This is in contrast to the OCP production recordings that include instrumentation indicative of a *Praise and Worship* band. In that context, it sounds more like a “Youth Mass” setting. However, most the participants at our regional meetings disagreed with my assessment of this as a “Youth Mass.”

- Side note: This project has prompted me to request a discussion on “liturgies for youth” in our Diocese. As a priest deeply involved with our youth programs, I have seen both the benefits and difficulties liturgies for youth pose. I would caution parishes not to overusing *Praise and Worship* music in their parish liturgies, but see it as an exception versus the norm for the parish’s liturgical life. Young people need to be exposed to the rich musical history of the Church. Therefore, a Mass specifically for youth should reflect that tradition and not become the “high energy” liturgy every time. Music selections should always have a pastoral concern for all members of a congregation.

**Conclusion:**

This project's goal was to recommend Mass settings to our parishes to help prepare for Advent 2011. Over 100 settings were analyzed and the following settings are now suggested to you:

- The Mass of Saint Frances Cabrini by Kevin Keil
- The Mass of Wisdom by Steven Janco
- The Mass of a Servant Church by Michel Guimont
- Music from the Roman Missal
- The Belmont Mass by Christopher Walker
- The Mass of Renewal by Curtis Stephan

Again, these are only recommendations and not mandates. The ultimate decision on which Mass settings are best for a given congregation remains with the local parish. We pray, however, that these recommendations will assist those who do not have time to review all the new Mass settings so they can be prepared for Advent of 2011.

**Special thanks:**

I would like to thank the many people who assisted me in this project. In particular, I would like to thank those musicians, pastors, and other committed lay people who attended the regional sessions at Sparta, Wausau, and Altoona. The feedback you provided helped shape my recommendations. In particular, I would like to thank Amy Gleason who provided wonderful insights as a pianist/organist. Your expertise and objectivity were invaluable. Finally, I would like to thank Chris Carstens and Bishop Callahan for trusting me with this task. I pray the fruit of this project will assist our Diocese to be prepared for the new translation of the Roman Missal this Advent.