



**NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF
PASTORAL
MUSICIANS
ARCHDIOCESE
OF KANSAS CITY
IN KANSAS AND
KANSAS CITY/
ST JOSEPH**

Chapter Directors:
Missouri: Ron Sondag
sondagron@gmail.com

Kansas: Vicky Neely
vneely@kcnativity.org

**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS**

Board Meeting Feb
Our Lady of the 17
Presentation, Lee's 12:30
Summit

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NPM News

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New Chapter Directors for Both Chapters

Ron Sondag returns as Chapter Director for the Kansas City/St Joseph NPM Chapter. He recently retired after 38 years of full-time parish ministry. His most recent employment was for 11 years at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Smithville, Missouri. As a pastoral associate his ministry included liturgy and music, adult faith formation, outreach services, and communications. He holds advanced degrees in Divinity and Pastoral Studies. Ron has been an NPM member for 30 years, and hopes to help us move forward with new ways to connect and grow in the midst of a diverse and challenging environment. Ron, thank you for saying "yes."

Vicky Neely also returns as Chapter Director for the Kansas City in Kansas Chapter. She is in her seventh year as Music Director at Church of the Nativity in Leawood, KS, where she directs the adult, children, and bell choirs, plus the youth band. She has advanced degrees in music education and liberal arts and spent 28 years teaching vocal music before becoming a full-time music director. Vicky has been an NPM member for 11 years and has served in several chapter positions, including Director at the time the KCK chapter officially became a chapter.

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to Maureen Henderson and Danny Baker for serving as Chapter Directors! Leading is often a challenge, but particularly so during these past two COVID years. We appreciate your time and talent and are grateful.

GET INVOLVED

Networking and involvement in professional camaraderie and development is more important than ever as sung liturgy continues to rebuild from COVID shut-downs. Join NPM today and take advantage of the online offerings. Go to npm.org and choose from Basic, Standard or Premium membership. The benefits of each are listed on page seven of this newsletter. Basic membership is only \$39.

As the website states, "NPM members advance the musical and liturgical life in the United States. All who serve at worship have a place here!"

Your ministry through music based on prayer and faith is one of the most important things you do in life and merits effort to make it the best that it can be. NPM, both local chapters and National, exists to help you with that journey.



This issue of the NPM News reflects on liturgy beyond the weekend Mass. Fr. Paul Turner writes of baptism within the Mass and Ron Sondag reflects on using music during the RCIA journey. Matthew Baumler gives us food for thought on the upcoming season of Lent and there is much more in tiny written bites. May these words, humbly offered, bring you refreshment and peace during these cold winter months. Your thoughts and ideas are welcomed. Consider posting on either of our Facebook pages or submit an idea or article to your editor.

St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, St. Cecilia, St. Gregory, St. Ephrem pray for us!

Baptisms at Mass: Tips for Musicians—Fr Paul Turner

Editor's Note: This article was first published in NPM's Pastoral Music magazine. See Fr. Turner's website for more articles and his blog at <https://paulturner.org>, including an excellent article on the Funeral Liturgy.

Infant baptism celebrations are undergoing a few changes with the 2020 *Order of Baptism of Children*. The latest in the series of revised liturgical books will get considerable usage in Catholic parishes throughout the English-speaking world. Musicians will want to be aware of several matters, especially on those occasions when baptisms are celebrated during a Sunday Mass.

The Reasons for the New Book

There are two reasons why the English-speaking Catholic Church is receiving new liturgical books. One is the change in translation principles enacted first with the 2011 Roman Missal. These are having a rippling effect throughout other liturgical ceremonies. The second reason is that some of these books have a new edition in Latin with updated content and clarifications that have not yet been translated. Both these reasons lay behind the missal: The translation was redone, and the third edition in Latin provided new content, such as collects for saints newly added to the calendar. The same was true of the 2016 *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, which received a new translation, but also had new content, such as a greatly expanded introduction.

The 2016 *Order of Confirmation*, however, was not the product of a new Latin edition. It simply received a new translation to bring it into greater harmony with the missal. The same is now true of the 2020 *Order of Baptism of Children*. There was a second Latin edition of the original, but it has been in force for over forty years. The English translation we have been using contains all the changes from that work. This is a newly revised translation of that forty-year old second edition.

New to this book, though, is an appendix spelling out in greater detail how a baptism takes place during the course of Mass. The first editions of the *Rite of Baptism for Children* explained the basic structure in paragraph 29, but it was still confusing to many people. Consequently, some parishes made further adaptations on their own. The USCCB's Committee for Divine Worship had the foresight to develop an appendix giving a clearer presentation of the celebration, and the Vatican has approved its work. So, even though we now have a revised translation of the book we've always had, it includes for the first time a section requested by our own conference of bishops, giving the book even more practicality.

The appendix includes the proper texts for the baptism of several children (250-295) and the baptism of one child (296-331). This article will reference the second option.

The Introductory Rites

Before the Order of Baptism for One Child within Mass begins, parents, godparents and the child to be baptized wait at the door of the church or in some other suitable place. The entrance chant begins (296). Musicians still have the same options they've had since the Second Vatican Council: they may sing the antiphon in the missal, or they may substitute a psalm or hymn. In most parishes, the community sings a hymn. During this time, the priest goes to the place where the baptismal party stands.

In many parishes, this group is already together at the door when the entrance song begins. In that case, it may be prudent to sing just one verse of the opening hymn. That will account for the entrance chant and gather the voices of the assembly into one.

The priest leads the sign of the cross (297), but he omits the usual greeting such as, "The Lord be with you." Instead, he gives a welcome to the baptismal party. The *Order of Baptism of Children* now scripts out a sample for him based on one that has already appeared in the Spanish translation (298). Omitting the penitential act, the priest then conducts the opening dialogue with the parents and godparents. This reaches its climax when he traces the cross on the child's forehead, instructing the parents to do the same. He may ask the godparents to sign the child as well.

In some communities, the priest has invited other people to sign the child's forehead. However, the liturgy envisions that the parents do this, with the godparents assisting if it seems appropriate. The signing of the child is their first demonstration of putting into act the pledge that they have just made. They have indeed undertaken the responsibility of raising the child in the faith.

The signing of the child gives the musician the cue to begin the next song. The procession to the altar forms, and it takes place with singing if circumstances permit (303). The suggested text is Psalm 85 (84):7, 8, 9ab. The first line addresses God in words that express the community's trust: "Will you not restore again our life?" As the child is about to be baptized, the people sing their confidence in God's power to restore human life with the gift of divine life. A different piece of music may serve. For example, if Mass began with only one verse of the opening hymn, the community could now sing the rest of it. (*"Baptism" continued page 3*)

Baptism Continued

As the priest approaches the altar, he reverences it in the usual way and goes to his chair (304). Then, on those days when it is prescribed, the Gloria is sung. It would not diverge too much from this vision to sing the Gloria in the procession to the altar in place of Psalm 85. The priest then offers the Collect (306).

The Liturgy of the Word

Musicians should be aware that during Ordinary Time, even at a parish Sunday mass, the readings may be taken from the lectionary's selections for the Conferral of Infant Baptism, as found in Volume IV, #756-760. This idea may not be commendable in a typical parish, where the readings of the day have inspired the homily, the petitions, the music, the bulletin art, and the preparatory meditations of the people of God. But it is permitted. Theoretically, a baptism at mass could affect the choice of the responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation.

Outside Ordinary Time, the readings of the Sunday prevail, but one of the readings from the Conferral of Infant Baptism may replace one of those assigned for the day (307).

Baptism

The baptismal ceremonies begin after the homily. Surprising to many is that they start with the universal prayer, also known as the prayer of the faithful (310). This has been the sequence since the 1970 *Rite of Baptism for Children*, but many parishes have not realized it or preferred to put the petitions after the baptism, as happens with other sacramental celebrations such as marriage.

However, the *Order of Baptism of Children* puts the petitions just ahead of the litany of the saints, whom the community implores prior to baptism. Baptism still retains some exorcistic features since the child is leaving the hungry grasp of Satan and receiving divine grace. We invoke the saints to guide the way toward the font, and the petitions for the child and other members of the community precede. The parish may include its own petitions in the list. These logically come first, and then the specific prayers for the one to be baptized conclude the prayer.

For the first time, the ritual book explicitly states that the full litany of the saints may replace the shorter one. The previous English translation put the full litany in the appendix, but it never indicated when to use it. Now it is listed as an option. This was another concession that the Vatican granted the USCCB with the 2020 publication. At a Sunday Mass, the full litany may prove too long, but musicians should know that they have this option.

The blessing of water is the same that appears in the missal's baptismal celebration for the Easter Vigil (317). However, the presider still has the choice of two other formulas (223-224). Musicians should be aware of these because they each include acclamations that are most often recited but could be sung. These latter two options provide a good opportunity for the full, conscious, active participation of the people by punctuating the priest's blessing with their own voices in praise of God.

For the renunciation of sin and profession of faith, the priest explicitly invites the entire community to join with the parents and godparents (319). This replaces their common recitation of the Creed.

The formula for baptism remains unchanged (323). All Catholics should know this formula in case of emergency. And no minister should alter these words. They are essential for the validity of the sacrament.

Immediately after the baptism, musicians may lead the community in an acclamation. The ritual book has always offered a selection of these, but now one of them will appear in the text as a reminder: "Blessed be God, who chose you in Christ" (323). *(continued "Baptism" page 4)*

PRAYER OF THE PENITENT

The 2010 USCCB Rite of Penance book contains ten possible prayers for the Penitent to say at the proper time in the rite. The commonly-prayed "My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart..." prayer is there, and another possibility is the brief "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Perhaps the choice to the right may serve to enliven your reception of the sacrament with fresh thought, contrition and resolve not to sin again.

Lord Jesus,
You opened the eyes of the blind,
Healed the sick,
Forgave the sinful woman,
And after Peter's denial confirmed him in your love.
Listen to my prayer:
Forgive all my sins,
Renew your love in my heart,
Help me to live in perfect unity
with my fellow Christians
That I may proclaim your saving power
to all the world.

Baptism Conclusion

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Mass resumes when the explanatory rites conclude (328). The priest should become familiar with the missal's ritual mass For the Conferral of Baptism. It suggests prefaces and offers proper formulas for intercessions within the four main eucharistic prayers. If he uses the Roman Canon, he actually names the godparents right within the heart of the prayer. This practice probably stemmed from adult initiation, where the names of the parents would matter less than the names of those who had sponsored the newly baptized.

Some Other Points

Musicians may be interested in a few other aspects of the new book that do not bear directly upon their ministry as musicians, but address circumstances they sometimes encounter.

Greater attention has been paid to gender-inclusive language in the translation. For example, while anointing with the oil of catechumens, the priest or deacon used to say that the Son of God came "to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendor of your kingdom of light" (49). Now he says that the Son came "to bring the human race, rescued from darkness, into the marvelous kingdom of your light."

At the Ephphatha, the minister used to proclaim that Jesus "made the deaf hear and the dumb speak" (65). In the United States, the word "dumb" is considered offensive. (The same is not true in some other English-speaking countries, which explains how the word first appeared in this prayer.) The translation has changed to proclaim Jesus who "made the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Deacons assisting at a baptism during Mass have a secondary role because the priest presides over the entire ceremony. The church's law does not clearly state that a deacon may baptize (or witness a marriage) during Mass. Yet sometimes it seems desirable for him to do so: he may be the infant's grandfather; he may have prepared the couple for marriage; he may speak a language that the family knows but that the presider does not. In those instances, it is advisable for the deacon to obtain permission from the bishop to preside for such a ceremony within mass.

The one who confers baptism "should strive above all to be courteous and affable to everyone" (7). A similar rubric appears in other ritual books, such as the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* and the *Rite of Penance*. It makes a person wonder if the group preparing these rituals after the Second Vatican Council included bishops tired of hearing complaints about grumpy priests, or people who themselves had suffered from discourteous ministers. Even though these words are directed to pastors and others who preside over these rites, they supply a reminder for all ministers. Even musicians "should strive above all to be courteous and affable to everyone." This will help seal a beautiful celebration and provide a subtle though sincere message of evangelization. When we gather for sacraments, we celebrate them. Our hearts should be happy. Parents are happy at the birth of a child, and the church is happy to introduce that child to sacramental life in Christ.

"The Revised *Baptism of Children*: What It Means for Pastoral Musicians." *Pastoral Music* 20:20 (44:2):10-14. NPM - Paul Turner 24.xi.19 - p. 5

**Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.**

BB McKinney 1886-1952



National NPM Happenings

**45th NPM 2022 Convention
Tested By Fire: Renewed and
Transformed
In-Person June 28-July 1
Louisville, KY
Virtual: July 5-7
Early Bird Registration by 3/26**

Training Videos Available

NPM at npm.org now has 17 short videos in the singing category, providing information and training on breathing, alignment, tempo and warm-ups. Also planned are videos helpful to building piano and organ technique. The videos are available to standard and premium-level members. Members of our two chapters have much to offer other pastoral musicians. If you are willing to make a 5-10-minute video, especially on piano or organ technique, contact NPM National and offer your services.

The January Issue of *Pastoral Music* contains information on NPM's summer convention. This information is also available on the website npm.org for all members (the magazine is part of the middle and top-tier memberships, not the basic membership of \$39). Articles whet the reader's appetite for the convention, including a Q & A with plenum speaker Laura Kelly Fanucci. The Convention Theme of "Tested By Fire: Renewed and Transformed" is explored by Tony Alonso, Brenda Noriega and C. Vanessa White. Fanucci asks the question, "How do we help people grieve their losses?" (of the past two years). She says "a big piece of our work in the Church [is] to help people see how God is calling them through this and in this. We're not great at lament as a culture, and we're not great at sitting with the tension of hard places....when you don't grieve, the grief comes out sideways. (as in perhaps anger)....I have never been so convinced of our need for the Resurrection. We need the hope that God is always at work, always renewing the face of the earth, that there is life beyond whatever the form of death is before our eyes."

C. Vanessa White speaks to all pastoral musicians in "From Fear to Mission" by calling for the Holy Spirit with sung prayer. "Every time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I shall pray. I'm gonna move when the Spirit say, 'move.'" Or pray BB McKinney's hymn on page one. Let us all call on the Holy Spirit and then "sing when the Spirit says, 'sing,' play when the Spirit says 'play!'"

Book Review: Mass 101: Liturgy and Life by Emily Strand

NPM Member Emily Strand wrote an excellent overview of the Mass. Strand formatted the short, well-written and easy-to-read paperback to be read individually or in a group formation setting. Each chapter ends with discussion questions. A wealth of quite detailed information on the theology, history, format and practice of the Eucharistic liturgy is provided succinctly in a hospitable style.

This reader found the section on the historical development of the Mass particularly interesting because of both its depth and brevity. Strand describes the liturgy from its beginning as a simple Day of Resurrection celebration with the apostles and the first disciples of Jesus Christ all participating actively in the gathering, through the effects of persecution but the even greater effects of the end of persecution when worship could become more public.

The Greek, Roman and French cultures all added elements to what Strand likens to a paper doll—the core use of Scripture and shared meal being the doll and over time numerous clothes and accessories were added. These uses of humor and colorful imagery make the book appealing and engaging.

Simplicity moved to complexity to abuses that the codification of the Council of Trent in the first Roman Missal corrected as Roman Catholic liturgy was unified worldwide for the first time. A number of liturgical books were consolidated into one Roman Missal to be used by all, with detailed rubrics or instructions (rubric comes from the Latin *rubeo* which means red—the color of the print).

Scholarship and study of the beginnings of the Church, the liturgy and the Early Church writings increased greatly in the 19th and 20th centuries, contributing much to the liturgical reforms envisioned by the Vatican II Council. These reforms hope to catechize more correctly through liturgy (*lex orandi lex credenda*—the law of prayer is the law of belief) and return the Mass to full, active participation by all present as Sunday prayer was in the very beginning. The writings of eventual-Pope Benedict XVI greatly influenced these reforms, as did Pope Pius X's *moto proprio* and the writings of Fr. Virgil Michel.

Strand has the ability to explain dense theological matters such as the Paschal Mystery in clear language, accessible to those without degrees in theology or philosophy. Those sections alone make it a worthwhile book to use in catechesis. She ends the book by going through each part of the Mass, explaining both history and the vision for how each section fits in today's Mass.

Reviewed by Barbara Leyden. Strand, Emily. *Mass 101: Liturgy and Life*. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2013. (New for \$11.99)

Rite or Right? A brief reflection on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults by Ron Sondag

As it stands now, the first word in the name of this collection of rites is “Rite.” Back in the day before it was promulgated, when it was more or less a “study edition,” I attended a workshop by the newly-formed North American Forum on the Catechumenate for help to better grasp an understanding of this new parish ministry which had been laid squarely in my lap. The entire time together was spent exploring the various “Rites” without any conversation about the “classes” we should be teaching. It dawned on me, with the help of Fr. James Dunning and Nick Wagner, to shift my focus from the need for catechumens to accumulate knowledge to more of a critical reflection and self-examination after experiencing the Rites. The Paschal Mystery is embedded there and is ripe for catechesis. Taken together with the opening of the Word of God, and the questions that come from the catechumens and candidates, any agenda we may have for their tutelage takes a back seat. Let the Spirit work! We’re not graduating them from Catholicism 101, we (the parish community) are on a journey of faith with them.

The music repertoire of the church is ripe with rich melodies and texts to help express and challenge these travels. Look up these themes and music specifically written for the RCIA liturgies in the topical and ritual indexes of your hymnal.

Seeking God:

- Lord, you have come to the seashore, neither searching for the rich nor the wise...
- Only this I want: but to know the Lord...
- Blessed be God, O blessed be God who calls you by name...
- O God, you searched me and you know me, all my thoughts lie open to your gaze...
- I heard the voice of Jesus say, “Come unto me and rest...”
- Come to me, O weary trav’ler, come to me with your distress...

Trusting God:

- Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me...
- You shall cross the barren desert but you shall not die of thirst...
- I have loved you with an everlasting love, I have called you and you are mine...
- Christ is made the sure foundation, Christ the head and cornerstone...
- God weeps with us who weep and mourn...
- My life flows on in endless song above earth’s lamentations...
- We walk by faith and not by sight...
- You are all we have, you give us what we need, our lives are in your hands, O Lord...
- We cannot measure how you heal or answer ev’ry sufferer’s prayer...

Ed. Note: Sung prayer lends its power to RCIA candidates as they journey, not just for book knowledge, but to begin a relationship with God that will transform their lives.



**Sacred Heart
Display
at Holy Cross
Parish,
KCMO**

When This Is Over by Laura Kelly Fanucci



"When this is over,
 may we never again take for granted
 A handshake with a stranger
 Full shelves at the store
 Conversations with neighbors
 A crowded theater
 Friday night out
 The taste of communion
 A routine checkup
 The school rush each morning
 Coffee with a friend
 The stadium roaring
 Each deep breath
 A boring Tuesday
 Life itself.
 When this ends
 may we find
 that we have become
 more like the people
 we wanted to be
 we were called to be
 we hoped to be
 and may we stay
 that way — better
 for each other."
 Laura Kelly Fanucci
 THE SUNDAY PAPER
 Reflection

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 Membership.
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 support pastoral music
 and your ministry.**



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

		Premium	Standard	Basic
DIGITAL RESOURCES				
Access to premium content on the website	Planning calendar	✓	✓	
	Digital conservatory	✓	✓	
	Choral practice tracks	✓	✓	✓
	Choral anthem project	✓		
<i>Ministry Monday</i> podcasts				
PUBLICATIONS				
<i>New!</i> Academic Journal		✓		
5 issues per year of <i>Pastoral Music</i> magazine	Print (option)	✓	✓	
	Digital	✓	✓	
23 issues per year of <i>Notebook</i> (e-news)		✓	✓	✓
Cantor Newsletter		✓	✓	✓
Weekly Sunday Word Reflection		✓	✓	✓
SKILL BUILDING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Access to Certification Programs		✓	✓	✓
Eligible for academic scholarships		✓	✓	
Eligible for NPM program scholarships		✓	✓	✓
Discounted rate for conventions		✓	✓	
Discounted rate for institutes		✓	✓	✓
Discounted rate for webinars		✓	✓	✓
Invitation to Colloquium		✓		
Invitation to Director of Music Ministry Institute		✓		
NETWORKING & LOCAL SUPPORT				
Membership in the local chapter (if applicable)	Chapter newsletter	✓	✓	✓
	Discount for chapter events	✓	✓	✓
	Chapter networking opportunities	✓	✓	✓
Access to social media groups		✓	✓	✓
<i>New!</i> Access to virtual networking forum/list serve		✓		
REPRESENTATION				
Voting privileges		✓	✓	✓

NOT JUST MASS MUSIC—SEVEN SACRAMENTS MUSIC by Barbara Leyden

The Eucharistic liturgy, or Mass, is not the only sacrament Catholics celebrate. All are considered important in the life of both the individual Christian and the Church. Importance leads to music in these other liturgies, music faithfully playing its role of unifying those present and intensifying the prayer. Pastoral musicians are often stretched thin just to lead sung prayer at weekend liturgies and for the big Feasts and Solemnities. The Church encourages singing at all sacramental rites, including not just Confirmation, First Eucharist and Matrimony, but also for all funerals, baptisms, large-group penance services, all RCIA rites and anointing of the sick. Singing for all Roman Catholic liturgy is to be nearly all communal with active participation from all assembled. Encouraging a funeral or wedding assembly to sing takes careful selection of music and inviting leadership. Teaching assemblies that they are called to participate actively, even outside weekend liturgies, is an ongoing task. Funeral and wedding repertoire should be familiar as much as possible; for example, the Gloria (wedding only) and Eucharistic acclamations need to be settings the majority will know. The singer should be inviting and leading, rather than singing in a soloistic manner that dominates. Choirs are preferred to soloists, but lack of energy and pastoral musicians mean any extension of music ministry beyond the Mass and a couple of yearly Penance Services is generally done by one instrumentalist and one singer. Baptisms outside of Mass rarely are sung unless the priest or deacon is very comfortable singing *a cappella*. However, providing musicians, even one cantor who can lead *a cappella* for baptisms is a powerful evangelization tool, as are other parish follow-ups, such as invitations to future church activities. Singing for lots of occasions also makes singing at Mass more normative. Something to consider.

NPM CHAPTERS FOR
THE DIOCESE OF
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KANSAS CITY IN
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NEWSLETTER

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1buogB3fbg>

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newsletter editors below.

Editors: Barbara Leyden
Diane Schell

Barbarastahlleyden@gmail.com
dianes@everestkc.net

National Association of
Pastoral Musicians,
PO Box 4207
Silver Spring, MD 20914-4207



Are You Ready for Lent? By Matthew Baumler

If we were to travel back in time a couple of generations ago, we would be entering the season of “Pre-Lent”. Instead of having liturgies for the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-Sundays in Ordinary Time, we would be celebrating Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima Sundays (meaning seventy, sixty, and fifty days before Easter). This period of two-and-a-half weeks starting nine Sundays before Easter, also known as “Shrovetide,” preceded Lent with a similar spirit of penance, atonement, and devotion.¹ These weeks were nearly identical to Lent; purple vestments, no Gloria, and no Alleluia. Although the goal was to “ease people into Lent,” it brought more confusion. Those not completely in tune with the church wondered “is it Lent already?” “did I miss Ash Wednesday?” or “is it time to give something up again?”

Included with the call to reform by the Vatican II Council, was a revamping of the Roman Calendar. Pre-Lent was removed and Ordinary Time continued until Ash Wednesday. The Council made the change not to address the confusion, but to emphasize the Paschal Mystery and the fullness of the resurrection. The change in turn restored the unity of Lent. The strong message of penitence was brought back to Ash Wednesday, and the significance of the Paschal Mystery was heightened by making the Easter Season the longest season in the calendar (apart from Ordinary Time) just as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* called for; “...duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of the Christian redemption and, above all, the Paschal Mystery...”²

Ash Wednesday is just around the corner; and whether we are ready for it or not, this day now marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. These weeks are set apart for us to draw our hearts closer to God, spend more time in prayerful reflection, and repent for what we could have done better. The lives of music directors, liturgists, and musicians these coming weeks are filled with planning and preparation for Lent and Easter, our own “pre-Lent,” if you will. We can easily get bogged down with planning and ideas for the coming season, and miss the transforming moments that happen right in front of us.

Lent is often over-simplified to “what am I giving up this year?” Abstinence can be a great place to start, but leaves much room for improvement. A better question to ask might be “WHY am I giving this up?” Consider changing your routine this year. Instead of giving something up, try giving something AWAY. For every day of Lent, put a non-perishable food item in a box to donate at the end of the season or a possession you no longer really need. No matter what you choose, remember that these small sacrifices and acts of discipline help put into perspective the ultimate sacrifice Jesus made for us. Prepare yourself these next few weeks as we approach Lent, and open your heart to allow God to enter you more fully.

“‘And yet even now,’ says the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart . . .’” – Joel 2:12

1. *The New Rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal* The Catholic Press Newspaper. 1960
2. Pope Paul VI “*Sacrosanctum Concilium*”. 1963