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Intercultural Ministry and Liturgical Celebration:
*An examination of pastoral ministry and liturgical praxis in light of inclusion,
hospitality, and accompaniment within diverse faith communities.*

By


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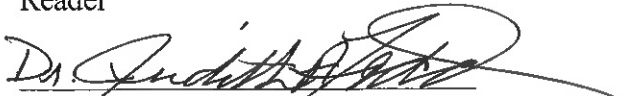
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of
Master of Theological Studies

Approved:


Thesis Director


Reader


Reader

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How can we create an authentic expression of worship that engenders inclusivity, intercultural, multigenerational, gender-LGBTQ+ inclusivity which celebrates the vision of Vatican II liturgical reforms and is representative of both the local gathered community and the global communion of the faithful?

I. Introduction:

The reforms of Vatican II created an opportunity for inclusion of the laity to minister in roles alongside their ordained counterparts in pastoral ministry and liturgical celebrations within the Roman Catholic Church. This expansion for participation by the laity would create many opportunities for community involvement on the parish level such as lay ecclesial leadership in faith formation, liturgical leadership, and education. Many other roles including upper management positions that were exclusive to male ordained ministers within the Church, were now available to lay ecclesial ministers. After the promulgation of the reforms of Vatican II and the opportunity for inclusion of the laity, many new programs and forms of ministry began to emerge. Some of these programs in faith communities across the country began to seek ways to involve the community in more meaningful ways. In many instances, while trying to create opportunities to involve the lay community, parish pastoral teams created sub-communities within local churches that compartmentalized groups of people. Often, these subgroups have alienated others whose lifestyles, genders, and other circumstances may not conform to the norms that are present within a community. In this thesis, I wish to share my experience creating a systematic approach to intentional inclusivity in the liturgy. This intentionality engenders a spirit of hospitality that creates an atmosphere of inclusion and intersectionality. Through an intentional ministry of presence within the daily lives of the community, a depth of trust and respect is fostered. Through these relationships, meaningful interaction, and intentionality of

inclusion, we gather to celebrate a *living liturgy* and sacrament and sign of the manifestation of God's love and acceptance in and through the community.

II. Historical Context

Before the reforms of Vatican II, the ministry, outreach, and celebrations of the Church were almost exclusively performed by ordained minister-priest or deacon. Religious orders of men and women also assisted in ministries such as faith formation, religious education for children, hospital ministry, and parish administration. However, most of the operations within the local parish to the diocesan level, to the hierarchical level was performed by ordained ministers or men and women religious.

Liturgical celebrations of the community were exclusively planned, prepared, and led by the priest-pastor who was responsible for the liturgical formation of the community. The mass was celebrated by the priest-presider *ad orientum*, facing the altar screen or wall with the assembly behind him facing the same direction. The liturgical prayers and scriptures were prayed and proclaimed in Latin. The music, primarily polyphonic and Gregorian chant, was performed by choirs of men and boys from the choir loft during mass. Congregational hymnody was sparsely present in Catholic liturgy during this time. Before the Vatican II reforms, non-ordained members of the community, especially women, had limited or no participation in the liturgical celebration. The experience of a communal celebration was not the focus; therefore, the assembly often times continued with their individual devotional prayers during the mass. In *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, author Rita Ferrone, an expert on liturgical praxis, gives a glimpse into liturgical forms of this time. She writes,

None of these matters could be taken for granted in the church of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The priest prayed in a language most of the people did not understand. He said mass with his back to them, in a voice that, for the most part could not be heard, while the people took part in individual devotions

autonomously and perhaps sang a few hymns. The choir alone sang the Sanctus and other prayers that now belong to the whole assembly, while the servers alone made the spoken responses. Marriage vows and baptismal promises could be spoken in the vernacular, but nothing else. There were no missals for the people to follow along with what Fr. was doing, no translations of the Latin for use in the pew. Sometimes more than one mass would go on at the same time, in the same church, on different altars. Since what the priest was doing didn't have any direct connection to what the people were doing anyway, this didn't necessarily disturb anybody. Concelebration was confined to ordination liturgies; otherwise each priest said mass alone.¹

III. Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II

The liturgical reforms of Vatican II called upon the Church to create ways in which the celebration of the liturgy would be broadened from the clerical exclusivity that prevailed to a more inclusive and robust expression of the community's faith. This broadened expression of faith would call for the inclusion of the laity in all ministries including within the celebrations of the Eucharistic liturgy. These liturgical reforms call for the laity to become more actively and consciously involved in the liturgical celebrations and ministerial outreach of the community.

Within the Vatican II reforms, some of the most dramatic changes occurred within the celebration of the mass. These liturgical reforms included the priest's posture. The presider no longer was to have his back to the assembly but to enter into a prayer dialogue with the gathered faithful during mass. Also, prayers and readings, once prayed and proclaimed in Latin, were now prayed in the community's vernacular. Liturgical music of various styles began being composed and used at Mass, including the use of multiple instruments and singable refrains in the people's language to encourage community participation rather than the traditional Latin Gregorian chant or complex polyphony performed by choirs in the choir loft. *The*

1. Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2007), 2.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states, “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.”²

The spirit of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II held the vision that the Church, the ordained and the laity, are called to come together in communion with the Risen Christ to celebrate the Eucharist. Both ordained ministers and the laity are called to unite to spread the Gospel’s mission and message and form a tightly woven tapestry of service to the Body of Christ and worship of God. The Vatican II reformers’ vision and the whole purpose of the reforms were the inclusion and participation of all the faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist and the service of the community. “In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.”³

The prevailing spirit of the reforms of Vatican II was to unify the work of the Church not to create a separated and compartmentalized experience of worship or ministry or to exclude whole groups of people from ministry. The vision of inclusivity was an interwoven expression of faith in which the ordained and the laity joined together to celebrate the faith of the Church in an

2. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), #11, accessed July 15, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

3. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #14, accessed July 15, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

inclusive way, celebrating the rich diversity of the People of God. This vision is one of unity in celebration and shared ministry for the whole Church.

Unity in faith and shared ministry then relates to and manifests in meaningful service to the gathered community and in worship.

The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with “the paschal sacraments,” to be “one in holiness”; it prays that “they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith”; the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and man draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, as from a font, grace is poured forth upon us; and the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God, to which all other activities of the Church are directed as toward their end, is achieved in the most efficacious possible way.⁴

We, the People of God, then understand that our lives as faithful witnesses of the ministry of Jesus are one circular act. From within our lives of individual and communal prayer, with lives of holiness we proceed into the world sharing in the mission of Jesus, then we return to the community and gather in prayer in communal celebrations, giving thanks and building up the community of the faithful from which we then are sent back from our celebration to live out this integrated life of prayer and shared mission.

In this vision of unity in prayer and shared mission, the writers of the Vatican II documents intended the whole Body of Christ to work and celebrate together. The authors of the Vatican II documents did not intend to create segregated communities with separate niches for certain groups, resulting in over-personalized and individualized worship and ministry. The authors also did not intend the exclusion of entire groups, such as women and members of the LGBTQ+ community, and faithful brothers and sisters of other faith traditions such as within the

4. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), #14, accessed July 15, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

Christian community including members of the Protestant and Evangelical communities and non-Christian community members such as members of the Jewish and Muslim communities. Their vision was a call to unity. Their scope of vision may not have fully grasped what their work and hopes would open to the Church in future generations. However, the Holy Spirit would enliven and infuse their words to broaden and illumine the modern Church to be open to many sweeping changes. Their vision would have the profound power to grow and change the trajectory of the Church in the most meaningful way.

In the light of the Holy Spirit's guidance, the authors of the Vatican II documents had the opportunity to fashion a Church of diversity of language, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, and other individuality. This diversity celebrates the gifts and uniqueness of each person while uniting the community of the faithful and also takes into account the intersectionality that exists within the experiences of each person or group. Understanding and examining these factors and complexities allow the community to come together in an authentic intercultural celebration of the community. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states, "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the "sacrament of unity," namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation." ⁵

5. Second Vatican Council. *Sacrosanctum Concilium-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), Section E, 41, accessed July 15, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

IV. Problems of Interpretation of Liturgical Reforms of Vatican II

The misinterpretation of the Vatican II reforms has created divisions in the Church's worship life on many fronts. First, the call for including the laity and using the vernacular languages has been misinterpreted to create overly-personalized sub-communities within local churches. These sub-communities have compartmentalized groups of people into small, boutique groups whose preferences have become the focus of why they gather. Some examples include liturgies such as *Life Teen* masses, exclusive parish children's masses, traditional Latin masses, masses with exclusive musical styles such as jazz masses, silent masses where the assembly prefers a quick, no-nonsense *ticket punch* mass, Spanish language masses, and other non-inclusive liturgies. These masses focus on the desires and or needs of one section of a community rather than integrating all members of the community into one celebration of unity. Well-intending ministers create a sub-group divided from the larger community with separate music and added private rituals at Sunday Eucharist that are meaningful and exclusive only to those *to whom the mass belongs*. Additional intentional and unintentional lack of inclusion of women and those in the LGBTQ+ community in ministry has become a sanctioned and overlooked stigma in our Church when addressing exclusivity and inclusion. Many examples of specialized liturgy exist within our American Catholic experience of Church. In this study, I will examine Life Teen or age-focused exclusive liturgies, liturgies that are single language/ethnicity within a diverse community, and a lack of inclusion of women and LGBTQ+ members in ministry.

The first example is the Life Teen movement begun by Monsignor Dale Fushek in Mesa, Arizona, in the early 1990s. This movement promoted teen-centered liturgies, which created an artificial community centered around youth with praise and worship music, dim lighting, and a

grunge coffeehouse experience of Sunday liturgy. Early in my ministry, I experienced attending a Life Teen mass as our pastor attempted to bring that ministry to our parish. The atmosphere was very artificial; everyone, including the adults present, were in jeans and t-shirts, the atmosphere of a coffee bar or *hang-out* was created by dimmed lighting, and the over-stylized praise and worship music was the central focus. The lyrics of all the songs in the worship aid spoke of an individualistic relationship with Jesus: “Jesus, *my* everything, Jesus, you are *my* Lord.” As the music played, the teens swayed and bunched up as if they were at a concert. The liturgical norms were altered to focus on the teens present. During the Eucharistic prayer, the teens were invited to encircle the altar as if they were concelebrating the Mass. During the Sign of Peace within the ritual of the Mass, there was a very elaborate and extended exclusive peace-giving ritual of long hugging and high fives extended exclusively within the huddle of teens, the priest, and the leaders. The few adults present stayed in the back in their pews. This atmosphere created a cult-like environment that excluded the rest of the community.

The same occurrence was present in our community when our pastor tried to duplicate the Life Teen experience with the youth of our parish. Our pastoral team thought that it would create an opportunity to recruit families to become more involved and create an outreach opportunity to minister to the adolescent population of the parish. This artificial sub-culture had the opposite effect on the community as it separated them into an exclusive subgroup of the parish. Some of the adverse effects included the teens attending mass only when it was required for them for sacramental preparation. The adults who attended with their students felt excluded, and it became a liturgy that felt forced, unauthentic, and many times awkward. The music ministry members were also required to exclusively use praise and worship music and incorporate the exclusive rituals used at *Life Teen* masses.

This exclusivity and *Life Teen* music with all of the liturgical trappings assisted in creating an over-personalized, ageist group that excluded everyone else in the parish. The more popular students with more friends became the group's dominant force, creating another exclusion experience for some teens. Some of the gay and transgender teens felt awkward and excluded. As with this group, often these subgroups alienate others whose lifestyles, gender, age, ethnicity, language, and other circumstances do not conform to the targeted or formed group. The whole experience of the teen-centered liturgy left community members feeling marginalized instead of included as one unified parish with diverse, whole families coming together in prayer. The Vatican II documents clearly state, "Therefore all should hold in great esteem the liturgical life of the diocese centered around the bishop, especially in his cathedral church; they must be convinced that the pre-eminent manifestation of the Church consists in the full active participation of all God's holy people in these liturgical celebrations, especially in the same Eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers."⁶

Another example of a pastoral misstep in interpreting the Vatican II message of inclusion of the laity is the single language/ethnic mass within a diverse, multilingual community. Often a mass exclusively celebrated in a specific language, such as a Spanish mass, is meant to draw a particular group to a parish and provide an opportunity for worship that is meaningful to that specific community. The preaching and the musical style of the sung prayer are all in one language; all of the ministers are from this sub-community of the whole parish community. The

6. Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium-Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1963), #10, accessed July 15, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

masses are often labeled with the ethnic group on social media and publications to advertise this celebration and draw participants.

As with the exclusivity of the *Life Teen* age-exclusive masses, this label connotes that only Spanish people are welcome to at the Mass. It also can be argued that the Spanish community is not welcome to attend other masses not labeled for them. The liturgy calls the People of God to gather together and to unify. Unifying the community must be an integral and constant part of ministerial and liturgical formation and praxis for inclusion to take hold. Rita Ferrone, writes in her study of the liturgical documents of Vatican II, “Liturgical services are not private functions. Community participation in the liturgy is a central concern of the documents. Without ruling out private celebrations, the document takes great pains to assert that communal celebrations are always preferred.”⁷ In *Principles of the Liturgy*, Christopher Carstens quotes Pope Benedict XVI:

But active participation does not mean, as Pope Benedict the XVI once put it, “something external entailing a need for general activity, as if as many people as possible, as often as possible, should be visibly engaged in action.” On the contrary, “active participation” calls the baptized to actualize their baptismal priesthood by offering, with the priest, Jesus, the “unblemished sacrificial victim,” but also “their very selves, and so day by day to be brought, through the mediation of Christ, into unity with God and with each other, so that God may, at last, be all in all. GIRM 79⁸

These parallel liturgies, study groups, musical groups, and individualistic niche groups cause disunity and segregation within the parish community. Often pastoral teams plan liturgies that include all of the groups but have no integration within the whole. They become tokenism, assigning each group a role within their perceived niche within the liturgy. The individual group

7. Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2007), 44.

8. Christopher Carstens, *Principles of Sacred Liturgy: Forming a Sacramental Vision* (Chicago, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2020), 18.

plays their particular part, but the ministers, cultural elements, and music liturgy have no integration within the celebration or with each other. They remain separate parts and lack unity in prayer and celebration.

Pastoral teams mistakenly create these multicultural experiences of the liturgy when it is an intercultural liturgy that we are called to prepare. In the Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, the authors speak of what can be when everyone comes together:

All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages so that the decree of God's will may be fulfilled. In the beginning, God made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered together as one. It was for this purpose that God sent His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, that might be teacher, king, and priest of all, the head of the new and universal people of the sons of God. For this too, God sent the Spirit of His Son as Lord and Life-giver. He is who brings together the whole Church and each and every one of those who believe, and who is the well-spring of their unity in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.⁹

The thoughtful integration of the whole community in prayer and ministry requires the vision of the clergy and leadership team, intention in all that is prepared, prayerful and thoughtful preparation, trust of the community over time and experience, and the prayerful cooperation of the whole Church. This trust and vision grows and develops over time. Outreach to the community, integrated social functions, family activities, sacramental preparation, and musical presentations lay the foundation for this growth as a unified community. An established foundation and connection are created between all the sub-communities in the activities and ministries of the parish. When the invited to come together in Eucharist and celebration, a sense of community now exists.

9. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium-Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965), #13, accessed July 22, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as sons of God, they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ. Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with it. Thus both by reason of the offering and through Holy Communion, all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself. Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament.¹⁰

“Thus, the liturgical celebration authentically manifests who the community is together. Who is the well-spring of their unity in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.”¹¹

The meaningful integration of the whole community in prayer and in ministry requires vision, leadership, intention, constant preparation, trust, and the prayerful cooperation of the whole community. This trust and vision grows and develops over time. Outreach to the community, integrated social functions, activities for families, sacramental preparation, and musical presentations together lay a foundation for this growth as a unified community. Thus, when the invitation is given to come together in Eucharist and celebration, there is a foundation laid and connections already established.

It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as sons of God they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the

10. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium-Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965), #11, accessed July 22, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

11. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, #19, accessed July 22, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

sacrament of Confirmation, and the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ. Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It. Thus both by reason of the offering and through Holy Communion all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself. Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament.¹²

Thus, the celebration is a manifestation of the identity of the whole community.

The modern Catholic Church has continued to sideline the roles and inclusion of women and members of the LGBTQ+ community in ministry. Women continue to be discriminated against and remain below the glass ceiling, only allowed to serve in supporting roles in ministry. Some Catholic clergy and lay leaders sanction and continue to promulgate this bigoted practice. Women have only recently been allowed to serve in critical leadership roles in the Vatican. In a recent article in *America* magazine, Nicole Winfield of the Associated Press writes

Pope Francis has significantly increased the Vatican's female workforce, including in high-ranking positions, but women face continued resistance from the all-male Catholic hierarchy to access leadership positions in the Church, according to Vatican statistics and independent surveys released Wednesday. The data was released as Francis marked International Women's Day by thanking women "for their commitment to building a more humane society, through their ability to grasp reality with a creative eye and a tender heart." Catholic women do the lion's share of the Church's work in schools, hospitals and passing down the faith to future generations, but have long complained of a second-class status in an institution that reserves the priesthood for men. Beyond the words, Francis has overseen a marked increase in the number and percentage of women working at the Vatican in his 10 years as pope, from 19.3% in 2013 to 23.4% today, according to statistics reported by Vatican News.¹³

12. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, #11, accessed July 22, 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

13. Nicole Winfield, "Pope Francis has made women leaders at the Vatican. But in the hierarchy, resistance remains.," *America: The Jesuit Review*, <https://www.americamagazine.org/voices/nicole-winfield-associated-press>, accessed July 23, 2023.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community are also discriminated against and have to remain closeted or lead double lives for fear of retribution and dismissal from their jobs in the Catholic Church. Dismissal from employment because of sexual orientation has occurred many times in recent history in the American Catholic Church and is cause for great concern. How can we continue to marginalize community members in this way and ignore the call to unity in Christ for all believers in worship and ministry? The Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium* states,

All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the decree of God's will may be fulfilled. In the beginning God made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered together as one. It was for this purpose that God sent His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, that he might be teacher, king and priest of all, the head of the new and universal people of the sons of God. For this too God sent the Spirit of His Son as Lord and Life-giver. He it is who brings together the whole Church and each and every one of those who believe, and who is the well-spring of their unity in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.¹⁴

Finding ways to break the molds of clericalism and gender and homophobic discrimination is of utmost priority for the continued growth and flourishing of our communities. Clericalism and gender discrimination is a corporate sin that is long overdue for its dismissal from the life and ministry of the Church in order to fully actualize the vision of inclusion of the Vatican II reforms.

14. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium-Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1965), #13, accessed July 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

V. Intercultural rather than Multicultural

A deeper look and exploration of the niche masses that have become popularized since the reforms of Vatican II is warranted in this examination. Since the reforms of Vatican II, the wave of interpretations of multicultural celebrations has exploded. Pastoral teams have searched for ways to draw members of different ethnic groups into their parishes. Often parishes, as mentioned before, will celebrate mass in various languages to draw in those members of the community, such as in a Spanish mass. The idea is to offer a mass in the common language of those the parish is trying to serve or attract. The intentions for creating single language masses are valid as the community may have a sizable ethnic group needing outreach from the parish. Creating this separate community draws them into attending the mass, but often can alienate them from the larger community as they become a subgroup of the parish. Additionally, as explained before, when the community comes together in worship during feast days, very little unifies them. With separate subgroups celebrating mass solely in their own language, with their own hymnody, and ministers, no common thread or whole community connection exists. They need a connection and integration with the whole parish.

Parish liturgies for special events are often planned, with each group performing an individual task or ministry in the liturgy. It has a *separate but equal* quality as all the communities have their own part, but it lacks integration. A continuation of this explanation is the example of the compartmentalized liturgy in which the Hispanic choir will sing one song, the African American choir will sing the Gospel hymn, the Native American drummers and dancers play and dance their part, the traditional choir will sing an anthem, the scripture readings will be proclaimed bilingually, and all participants stay in their *ministerial lane* until it is their time to perform. This type of segregated liturgy is an example of what has been called *multicultural*

liturgy and what is planned in parishes all over the country. Well-meaning liturgical committees attempt to include all of the groups in the parish; however, there is a lack of integration of each of the parts liturgically. The groups remain compartmentalized, lacking cohesion without the liturgical elements woven together and unified.

The fullness of the experience of an integrated multicultural celebration is an intercultural liturgy. In an intercultural liturgy, all groups and liturgical elements are integrated within the context of the liturgical prayer and one another. All the participants are unified, yet celebrate their culture's richness and diversity within the integrated liturgy. In the collection of writings, *Misa, Mesa, y Musa, Liturgies in the U.S. Hispanic Church*, Rosa Maria Icasa writes,

Vatican II called for full participation in the liturgy. What cultural characteristics among Hispanic Catholics help or hinder their participation in liturgical celebrations? If we speak of an inculturated liturgy, we must first know what we understand by liturgy and culture. Liturgy is the praise of the Father by the total Christ, Head, and members, in the power of the Spirit. Liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery: life, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. This mystery continues to be lived in our life. In the liturgy, therefore, we celebrate what we have lived and live what we have celebrated.¹⁵

An example of an intercultural liturgy is when all of the elements and participants unite. In this intercultural liturgy, the ministers and the assembly would unite to participate, pray and sing the texts in various languages and styles together. The elements such as native drumming would be integrated into various parts of the celebration including on the hymns that may not be native in style. The scripture readings, the presidential prayers, and the universal prayers would all be proclaimed bilingually or in several languages representing the community. The assembly would be encouraged to participate with a printed participation aid with translations for the texts

15. Rosa María Icaza, *Do We Have Inculturated Liturgies? in Misa, Mesa y Musa: Liturgy in the U.S. Hispanic Church*, ed. Kenneth G. Davis, OFM. (Schiller Park, IL: World Library Publications, 2008), 18.

proclaimed in different languages so that all feel comfortable participating to their ability. This woven experience of liturgy would be an example of integration and intercultural liturgical preparation.

In the Vatican document, *Culture and Religion from Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools-Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love*, the Congregation for Catholic Education writes, “Religion is incultured, and culture becomes fertile ground for a richer humanity that measures up to its specific and profound vocation to be open to others and to God. Therefore, “It is time ... to understand in a more profound way that the generating nucleus of every authentic culture is constituted by its approach to the mystery of God, in whom alone does a social order centered on the dignity and responsibility of the human person find its unshakeable foundation.”¹⁶

This integrated intercultural experience speaks to the deepest needs of individual members to be part of a community in a meaningful way. Celebrating in an intercultural way must become habitual and the norm of a parish to honor the community’s diversity in weekly celebrations. Planning annual multicultural liturgies are merely a starting point. In this way, liturgical celebration is not *planned* but rather thoughtfully prepared for the community. This prepared liturgy honors all of the elements and cultures into an integrated experience of the local Church and in unity with the global Church. The community experiences a meaningful liturgy that allows and challenges them to make room for others and to enter into this diverse way of prayer. In this integrated experience, the faithful are reminded that the celebration of the Church in the mission of Jesus is beyond their comfort and individualistic desires. The celebration of

16. Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools-Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1965), # 7, accessed July 2023. <http://www.vatican.va>.

Eucharist is of the whole Church in all its diversity. This inclusive liturgy should also include those of different faith traditions who may also want to become *one around the table of the Lord*. In the Vatican document, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture*, the Pontifical Council for Culture states, “What matters is to evangelize man’s culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots), in the wide and rich sense which these terms have in *Gaudium et Spes*, always taking the person as one’s starting-point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God.”¹⁷

VI. Understanding Intersectionality, Hospitality, and Accompaniment in light of creating a ministry of inclusion.

Three essential components must be examined in light of creating an intercultural parish community that is inclusive of all persons in an integrated way: intersectionality, hospitality, and accompaniment. First, intersectionality in light of ministry and worship is necessary. In *Intersectional Theology* by Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, the authors write that intersectionality is achieved when we recognize the lived experience of the individual in light of the existing power structures of the individual person. Understanding the complexities of intersectionality within a person or group allows for a greater understanding of their personal experience. This heightened understanding of the complexities within each person and collective group assists in broadening views away from what the authors call *single-axis* thinking. A broadened awareness of the needs and nuanced experiences of others helps to create lines of

17. Pontifical Council for Culture, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1965. July 2023), #4, accessed July 2023, <http://www.vatican.va>.

communication, deepen connections, and create space for everyone within celebrations and ministry. They write,

Intersectional theology recognizes that each of us exists in differing relationships to power and hierarchy based on gender, race, class, nation, sexual identity, ability, age, and other forms of social difference. We simultaneously experience advantage and disadvantage based on the intersections of these identities within interlocking systems of oppression, and these complex and nuanced distinctions play an important role in how each of us does theology. Our identities and experiences are never removed from the theology we produce. There is always some context in which we do our theology, and theology exists in context. This fact of existence offers both limitations and possibility for our theologizing. On the other hand, we cannot produce theologies for which we claim universal applicability: on the other, we can only produce the theologies that we do from our social locations, and so each of us has something significant to add to the whole of Christian theology. Without each of our contributions, the whole is less adequate, less descriptive of the entirety of theological possibility.¹⁸

In order to create ministries of inclusion, we must first authentically examine the complexities and intersectionality of our communities. We must fully and honestly evaluate our current scope of ministry and how it relates to faith formation outreach, sacramental preparation, and liturgical celebrations. Then we must examine how we prepare liturgies and question whether we are preparing liturgies and outreach that celebrate and speak *through* the diversity within our local church communities. Important questions could be: “Do our liturgies speak with and *through* the diversity of the gathered community, or does it speak *at* them or *to* them?” By speaking through the community, we ask these or similar questions: “Does our ministry or celebration reflect, represent, and witness our diversity while considering the universal way we celebrate as a global Church?”

Serious questions and examinations must be asked of pastoral teams and the effectiveness of the current systems in place. Once an honest assessment is made, pastoral teams

18. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, *Intersectional Theology: An Introductory Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 41.

can build upon those foundations and identify areas in need of improvement. We then must strive to create ways to celebrate and honor the diversity and complexity of our community to create pathways of connection and unity. In creating pathways and opportunities of unity, the mission of Jesus is celebrated *within* and *through* the whole community. Separate, parallel ministries and celebrations fall short of this ideal of a unified intercultural vision. Vision, creativity, consistency, and dedication are needed for an inclusive and integrated whole parish experience.

A starting point would be to form the parish leadership team, which reflects the community's diversity. The needs of the community should be examined and evaluated based on the criteria of intersectionality: gender, race, class, nation, sexual identity, ability, age, and other forms of social difference. An audit of the current ministries and structures is essential. Questions should be asked about preconceived judgments and *single axis* thinking regarding women's roles in ministry, inclusivity of LGBTQ+ persons in the woven fiber of the parish, pastoral outreach in a secularized society, and other vital issues facing ministry in our modern parishes.

After an honest assessment is made, a systematic outreach plan in all areas can then be established and executed. Shaw and Kim write, "Recognition that there are multiple axes of thinking widens our scope of critical reflection, learning, and theological reflection. If we fall into single axis thinking, we flatten diversity within groups and ignore the myriad ways intersecting oppression shape experience. Both/and thinking requires we imagine the subjects of our theologizing in all of their complexity."¹⁹

Understanding and honestly identifying our preconceived biases and ignorance can be the beginning of real growth and authenticity. Acknowledging our biases and identifying areas

19. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, *Intersectional Theology*, 53.

needing professional development are essential to ministry in our modern parishes. Continuing to implement systems that have been used for years solely because “*it is how we have always done it*” is inadequate. Gleaning the practical tools from our past and current ministries and blending them with new ministry ideas will open channels of communication to create an atmosphere and space for inclusion and growth.

The essential issue, then, is how do we unify our community in prayer? Who of the community are within the circle of inclusion and who may feel as though they are peering in from the margins? Identifying these persons and groups to provide ways to include, support, and nurture their faith is our duty and sacred responsibility as pastoral leaders of our faith communities. We must soul search and examine who is coming to the Eucharistic table, to our faith formation gatherings and outreach, and possibly, more importantly, *who is not*. Kim and Shaw write,

In the Church, intersectional thinking can help us address pressing social problems with significantly deeper and more nuanced analysis and practice of our faith through underpinning theologies that inspire and facilitate just action in the Church and in the world. Intersectional theology causes us to start this work in our own houses, to address single-axis thinking and the perpetuation of systems of domination in the Church itself. Intersectional theology helps us understand and build the Church as a community of diverse people with diverse experiences perspectives and beliefs, committed together to work toward God’s community of love peace and justice. Intersectional thinking helps us understand why Sunday morning at 11:00 is the most segregated hour in the country, why church membership is declining, and why the Church seems irrelevant. The Church has harmed people through beliefs and practices that do not embody the love of God toward all: why we can’t seem to talk across our differences, and why some Christians have abandoned their own moral convictions to support a political administration that contradicts basic Christian beliefs of honesty, compassion, and fairness. Intersectional theology offers as a way forward, a blueprint for a different kind of theology and a different kind of Church that reflects the diverse and multiple people of God in all their difference. It also gives us a goal and a method -Justice. Embracing our differences, and joining together, we can be just in our means and have justice as our end. Intersectional theology reminds us of the gospel’s message of liberation, inclusion, welcoming, equality, and love

which demands that our theologizing and our practice of Church, we always work in that direction.²⁰

Secondly, once a systematic plan is in place, a whole parish infused with a spirit of hospitality must follow. In *Making Room, Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Christine Pohl writes, “We offer hospitality within the context of knowing Jesus as both our greater host and our potential guest. The grace we experience in receiving Jesus’ welcome energizes our hospitality while it undermines our pride and self-righteousness. The possibility of welcoming Christ as our guest strengthens our kindness and fortitude in responding to strangers... People view hospitality as quaint and tame partly because they do not understand the power of recognition... Hospitality can begin a journey toward visibility and respect.”²¹ This spirit of hospitality and inclusion must permeate every aspect of our parish ministry and be the lens used to view all aspects of ministry.

Hospitality and inclusion begin with the pastor’s leadership, followed by the pastoral team and clergy, and then filtered down to the preparation of all ministries and celebrations. From the ministers who have prepared the environment earlier in the week, to the maintenance staff who keep the gardens of the church beautiful as the faithful gather, to those who have prepared the scriptures for proclamation, to the liturgy staff that has lovingly prepared the prayer and worship, to the office staff who have welcomed new parishioners and thanked donors, to the ministers of hospitality who have greeted the faithful as they enter, to the clergy and pastoral staff that have counseled, catechized and rehearsed music, buried those who have died, consoled families, prepared sacraments; all must have a shared mission and template of hospitality. The

20. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, *Intersectional Theology*, 108-109.

21. Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 105-106.

whole parish operates under one shared mission of inclusion and hospitality in the faith of Jesus Christ.

This systematic focus on hospitality and welcome has to happen intentionally at every mass and parish gathering and be at the forefront of who we are. Acclaimed liturgist Austin Fleming writes,

The presider's responsibility extends beyond his presence, gestures and words in the sanctuary. The presider, or as the title suggests, has a responsibility for all the ministries in the liturgy and for how they function and how they enable connections in the celebration. Just as no other single factor affects the liturgy as much as the attitude, style, and bearing of the celebrant in the sanctuary, so might it be said that no single factor affects the preparation for the celebration of the liturgy outside of the sanctuary. Since it is increasingly the case that the presider is also the pastor, and a member of the pastoral staff, it is easy to see how his responsibility as pastor extends to his relationship and his connectedness to the community at large, to the pastoral musicians, lectors, preachers, ministers of the Eucharist, ministers of dance and ministers of Christian initiation. All of these various ministries are charged, like the presider with helping the community to connect: to connect the past with the present with the future in the Paschal mystery; to connect the visible and hidden in the sacramental life of the Church and to connect the dots in the saving pattern of life and death larger than ourselves and beyond our own experience.²²

Our attention to hospitality must be a primary consideration. It is the key to entering into and fostering the richness of our diverse cultural expressions. When people feel seen, valued, and heard, they will participate and want to share more of themselves. Hospitality and inclusion will engender an openness to participate in ministries and willingness to become more active in the life of the parish. In this spirit of hospitality, the whole parish enters into the mission of Jesus. Hospitality can create meaningful experiences of celebration and ministry that lead our communities into the service to which we are all called. In *An Unfinished Council*, Richard

22. Austin Fleming and Victoria M. Tufano, *Preparing for Liturgy: A Theology and Spirituality* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997), 79.

Gaillardetz writes, “In order to be leaven, Christians must be willing to get their hands dirty, to work side-by-side with other men and women of goodwill for the improvement of the human condition and work for justice. Christians will do so with a particular set of convictions and motivations, of course, for they will see their work as cooperation with the grace of God and in service of the in-breaking of God’s reign.”²³

The third integral component to an intercultural community is accompaniment. Feminist theologian, Elizabeth Johnson developed the theology of accompaniment in which she explains that God became a human being in the incarnation of Jesus Christ to fully enter into and experience with humankind what it truly is to be human. By doing so, God, in the person of Jesus Christ, experienced all that it was to be human including pain, suffering, joy, love, and fear. In the person of Jesus, God showed God’s great love for humanity by becoming one of us, “*walking beside us*” or accompanying us. Elizabeth Johnson writes, “This alternative envisions the living God actively accompanying the world in its evolutionary and historical breakthroughs, human sinfulness, and its universal suffering and death, with overflowing mercy that endures forever. Such a theology of accompaniment is but one way to understand redemption that will support planetary solidarity and work for eco-justice.”²⁴ In this theology of accompaniment, the Living God is one with humanity in all life aspects and moments. Accompaniment creates an unbreakable bond of intimacy, unity, and oneness between God, human beings, and all creation. In accompaniment, a relationship and sacred presence can be counted upon consistently.

23. Richard R. Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council-Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 66.

24. Elizabeth Johnson, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018), 205.

This idea of accompaniment relates to pastoral ministry in outreach and celebration as we carry out the mission of Jesus. We, as disciples of Jesus, enter into the accompaniment of one another both on the spiritual journey and as a community in all aspects of life. In this manifestation of the accompaniment theory, the faith community is an essential and integrated part of the lives of its members. In this way, crucial moments of life and death such as sacraments, weddings, funerals, graduations, and weekly ministries such as choir practice, faith formation sessions, youth groups, and weekly liturgies become woven together to create a bond of trust that translates into a vibrant and active community in ministry and in worship. The Church is no longer separate from its members but a vital lifeline where they can find support in their daily lives. Pope Francis writes of this new evangelization, “Men and women, on the existential peripheries created by a consumerist, atheistic society, wait for our closeness and our solidarity! The gospel is the message of the love of God, who, in Jesus Christ, calls us to participate in his life. Therefore, this new evangelization: to become conscious of the merciful love of the Father in order that we may become a popular instrument of salvation for our brothers.”²⁵ The Church community is no longer irrelevant or another activity to attend, but an integral part of the lives of its members. Pastoral teams and ministers form a bond of trust that nourishes and strengthens the faith and strength of the community.

This bond of trust and fostered relationship then provides the connection, bridge, and point of entry into participation into the life of the parish community. The Church becomes *who we are* instead of *what we do*. Diana Macalintal, in *Your Parish is the Curriculum*, writes, “We cannot change other’s hearts; only the Holy Spirit can do that. We can only change ours. The best

25. Pope Francis, Plenary Assembly Address, (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2020), accessed July 28, 2023. <http://www.vatican.va>. May 29, 2015.

way we can persuade those who have left the Church is to love them constantly but love those who wait for closeness even more. If, time and again, our absent loved ones see us working tirelessly to heal the wounds of those at the peripheries, that will be our greatest testimony that may, in the Spirit's time, inspire our loved ones to come home."²⁶

The ministry of Jesus is then authentically manifested within the ministry of the clergy, pastoral team, and all who serve each other in the parish community. Elizabeth Johnson writes, "To sum up, the living God, gracious and merciful, always was, is, and will be accompanying the world with saving grace, including humans to their self-fullness, and humans and all creatures in their unique beauty, evolutionary struggle, and inevitable dying."²⁷ In this theory of accompaniment-building connections and bridges of inclusion and trust, we foster a ministry of presence with one another that becomes the foundation of our celebrations and links us to the larger mission of Jesus. This ministry of presence deepens with time, experiences, and earned trust. The doors of hospitality are open wide for all when inclusion, trust, and connection lead the community to fullness and authenticity in our Sunday celebrations. From the margins of life, our community members, who have experienced being on the outside, marginalized because of their lifestyle, ethnicity, and gender, have a bridge in us to the community and reason to enter into the life of the faith community. We are the bridges of hospitality, inclusion, and love that make space for all in our liturgies of integration. When we prepare our celebrations through the template or lens of inclusion, unity, and integration, our intercultural celebrations have context in our histories and connections. In this integrated intercultural experience, everyone is valued as a vital and essential member of the community's tapestry.

26. Macalintal, Diana, *Your Parish is the Curriculum* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018), 25.

27. Johnson, Elizabeth, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018), 225.

VII. Conclusion: Final evaluation, building bridges, and Living Liturgy as Witness through music.

Understanding the ideal of intercultural inclusion draws us into the central way that we express both our individual and communal faith. The Sunday Eucharistic celebration is then a manifestation of who we are as a community of believers united together in celebration and worship. This intercultural, interconnected celebration has the potential to be the fullness of the expression of all God's people within the local Church connected to the expansive global Church. Thoughtfully, prayerfully, and creatively preparing liturgies of inclusion have the potential to manifest fully all of the dreams of the authors of the Vatican II reforms and change the trajectory of a stalling church.

When we truly identify what groups from our larger community have been left in the margins – those not coming to our churches each week, those who are marginalized by the borders we have created by our judgement, exclusivity, indifference, and power – true change can begin to transform our communities. When we settle for the path of least resistance and continue to engender the exclusive and tired systems of the past, when we do what we have always done *because it works for us*, we are tightening the airtight container of exclusion on the voices of those for whom we have a sacred responsibility to try to understand and welcome. When we throw in and arbitrarily add *cultural elements* on special days without careful consideration or preparation of the community, we do a disservice to our Church and risk offending or trivializing the valuable gifts of diversity that exist within our communities. When we consciously pull out the same order of worship with the same people in the same way, year after year, without real evaluation, we stagnate and allow our complacency to take hold and stale our prayer and growth as a community. When *who we say we are* on Sunday is not what we *live*

throughout the week, we become this artificial, dualistic community that only preaches the mission of Jesus with our mouths rather than a lived faith in action within our lives in the community. In *Church as Field Hospital*, Erin Bringham writes of the experience of creating the Church as sanctuary:

When volunteers and staff expressed positive views of the church, it was generally around a person or community perceived to embody the gospel. One woman described activist nuns and priests who she saw leading the sanctuary movement in the 1980s, another named Jesuit in college who taught her about social justice. Some people spoke in more general terms, pointing out that religion can inspire people to goodness. One person observed that religion has staying power in working with marginalized communities when individuals, secular nonprofits, or state sponsored services leave to feed communities stay. The secular age recognizes this longing to see the embodiment of faith, even if cannot be grasped.²⁸

We must challenge ourselves to do better! To be *one around the table of the Lord* is to take the time to truly listen to and to learn about the stories of those who have gathered even when the sound of their words is unfamiliar or strange to us. I have been fortunate to have never experienced hunger and aside from the normal *robbing Peter to pay Paul* that occurs in most families, I have never had to worry about how my husband and I were to feed, clothe, or provide a suitable home for our sons. Yet, that is a reality for many in our communities. Most of us have the luxury of having the opportunity of explaining our needs and dreams to anyone who will listen, and most often, we are heard. However, many people within our community and Sunday assemblies have no one in which to turn to plead for help or to share life's burdens. Their fear of being discovered as illegal or undocumented, fear of discovery as trapped in the wrong body, filled with confusion and needing acceptance, living in an abusive home, or the myriad of other scenarios that are present within our communities is real and colors their entire existence.

28. Erin Bringham, *Church as Field Hospital-Toward an Ecclesiology of Sanctuary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2022), 135-136.

In order to truly serve and heal in the *field hospital* of our Church, we must be willing to meet our community members where they are and journey with them, accompanying them in their lives-lived faith in action. Pope Francis writes in his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, “We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people’s troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment”²⁹

The challenge is real and as authentic as the needs of the real people whose struggles and stories that are waiting to be heard, whose diverse voices and lives are waiting to find expression within our prayer. The growing knot in my stomach has become more present with every searing question. How are we, *the Church of God, blessed and holy*, living witnesses of faith in action? Are we a lived expression of faith within our personal daily and weekly lives and ministries? Are we actively seeking to find ways to welcome those who are estranged, those who are widowed, those who are struggling with their sexual identity, those who are far from home, giving voice to their diverse gifts and struggles, and truly becoming a family of faith? What language and descriptors are we using to invite and reach those in the margins within our communities? Do our words unite and heal, or divide, exclude and separate our community? Is labeling it the *Spanish Mass* implying that only Hispanics are welcome? Or conversely the *English Mass* implying those who are not English are not welcome to enter and celebrate? Our words mean something. Labels such as gender or age-specific liturgies can create tidy containers seeming to

29. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti-On Fraterniti and Social Friendship* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2020), #77, accessed July 17, 2023. <http://www.vatican.va>.

serve yet can become islands in our communities and avenues of isolation for some. Let us challenge ourselves not to label our celebrations in ways that divide us.

In order to break open the crust of our tidy Sunday worship, we must truly examine who we are as a community, who is in need in our community, and then challenge ourselves to go out into the vineyard of the Lord to see, to listen, to speak with rather than to, and walk with our brothers and sisters. We must give those who dwell within the margins of our communities a voice...honor their voices rather than the sanitized version of what we think they are saying. When we authentically go beyond our personal borders, comforts, and complacency of ministry, we are able to give authenticity to the diverse elements that we are called to be on Sunday. Adding multicultural elements to our prayer, then, has context and is a true expression of who *we* are not who *they* are. It is not an external, well-intentioned, tokened addition but truly an intercultural expression of community. My late father was a farmer and a simple man of deep faith and profound wisdom. He often would say “Hablando la gente, se entienden” which translates “when people speak with one another, they will understand one another.” When we meet one another in a personal way, opening ourselves and learning about other the lives, struggles, and cultures of the people with whom we pray, accompanying them in their life’s journey, we enter into the family of Christ and into the oneness to which we are called, the Body of Christ. It is no longer *them* or *those people* or *the* _____. It is now *we*.

Building Bridges

To truly celebrate and bring forth the diverse gifts of those who are gathered, we have to open ourselves to a deep longing for understanding and have a willingness to be in conversation with these diverse groups within our communities. We must consciously work to make connections and build bridges and identify others within our parishes who are the bridges to these groups. It requires an open and real dialogue with those who are the bridges to the community rather than imposing upon them what we think their needs are.

Planning with intention as a parish and by insisting that the pastoral leadership team, under the direct leadership of the pastor, are united in the vision of one parish community and that the goal of everything that is implemented pastorally, is to create unity, inclusion, and intercultural worship and ministry. Ministry with unified intention and purpose by the whole pastoral team including clergy is critical. Respect for the ministerial roles of the laity is required by the clergy to work together and a commitment by the whole team to persevere and unite despite their differences. This commitment to unity and inclusion is critical to the ongoing realization of this intercultural community.

The commitment to unifying and accompanying one another is where actual ministry to the real needs of our community becomes authentic and takes flight. In creating space for everyone, we step out of the stale molds that bind us to our comfort, those that we have worked hard to hone and solidify and put the needs of the community before our own. We allow Christ to lead us and transform the elements of our liturgies; our music, our dance, our environment into an expression that speaks with and through all that we are as a community. In this way, we are profoundly forming with intention the prayer of a generation.

Living Liturgy as Witness through Music.

Central to most elements of music-making is the unique requirement of collaboration with others. Soloists must collaborate with their accompanists, choral and instrumental musicians must lean into one another and their conductor for support, blend, phrasing, harmony, diction, and many other vital artistic elements. Unity is at the heart of great music making. This centrality of unity and collaboration makes music-making and ministry an extraordinary opportunity to create an atmosphere of inclusion and unity. Conversely, music can create deep divisions in parish communities. Musician elitism, singular stylistic masses, and lack of commitment to ministry and preparation, are some of the divisive issues that can arise in music ministry. In my thirty-five years of music ministry, liturgy preparation, and choral conducting in churches, schools and professional choruses, I have found that music is an extraordinary instrument that can overwhelmingly be used to unite, include, and uplift. Within the choruses, those who have accomplished musical proficiency can uplift and support those with lesser skill levels. Those who have lesser musical skill can often find a home within a community of singers that raises not only their ability, but their sense of accomplishment and becomes a point of pride and immense joy. Within an ensemble, cooperation and collaboration are key to success. The talented, skilled, and the novice must all work together to attain the finished product: an artistic and well-prepared performance.

In music ministry, all of the technical elements of music exist; however, the added essential element of faith and devotion color and give purpose beyond the music itself. Musicians are called to accompany one another on their faith journeys, and often, groups who have been together in ministry for years become truly a family of faith. This is true for the music ministry of the Cathedral Basilica with whom I have served in ministry for twenty-two years.

Over this extended time under my leadership, we have intentionally created an environment of inclusion and welcome to new members of various ages, from small children, adolescents, and adults, to include various ecumenical faith backgrounds, singers and instrumentalists with varying musical proficiency and skills, lifestyle backgrounds to include men and women who are married, single, divorced, LGBTQ+ adolescent and adult members, varying ethnic backgrounds and cultures to include Mexican and Latin American immigrants, Native American chanters, drummers, and dancers, and seasonal visitors from around the world. This ministry has grown to become an authentic representation of our diverse faith community and a share in the diversity of the global church.

Throughout the year, in addition to our individual rehearsals and cantor preparation, we unite in weekly rehearsals to pray and to prepare our common repertory for the Sunday masses. Everyone attends and sits in mixed age and gender musical sections according to voice part. Everyone participates in and prepares the diverse musical styles that will be utilized at mass and throughout the year. Over the years, I have had to create new ways of reaching out to parishioners. I spend hours reviewing and selecting hymnody and choral music whose texts are reflective of who we are as a community and contain important elements such as inclusive language, varying styles and languages which celebrates the love of God within the text of our common sung prayer. When our music ministry has included monolingual Spanish speakers, I have taken time to meet with them separately to ensure that they feel comfortable and conducted rehearsals bilingually. The music staff and I are constantly preparing rehearsal tracks for those who cannot read music and for the children to rehearse at home. We have created a handbell ministry and marimba ministry in order to provide more opportunities for inclusion and participation.

Communal prayer, fun warm-ups and fellowship, and non-musical community building opportunities have added to the cohesion of the group to each other and to the larger faith community. This closely-knit community has become the cornerstone of our parish throughout my tenure. The cohesiveness of the music ministry sustained the members of this ministry and parish through the jubilee years of the 400th anniversary of the Cathedral Basilica, the installation of three Archbishops, the burial of two Archbishops, installation of four Cathedral rectors, and the Covid 19 pandemic. During the pandemic closures, the Cathedral Basilica music ministers continued to meet weekly online to pray together and check in on one another. I would rehearse the music for the livestream broadcasts for the upcoming week with them so that they could keep singing and feel connected to me and the parish community. Throughout the pandemic closures, we created virtual choir videos for the Feast of All Souls. For Christmas we created a full hour Lessons and Carols production for our community. It took an immense amount of work to record practice tracks for everyone, for the individual members to video and audio record their parts, and then create a full production. Through these creative opportunities, the music members were able to stay connected to one another and to continue to serve their community safely from their homes.

Throughout these years of ministry, I have accompanied musically and pastorally hundreds of families in preparing their family funerals, weddings, baptisms, and community events. The consistency of my ministry, together with my colleagues at the Cathedral Basilica, has provided stability, refuge, and cohesion in times of change and turmoil. The ministry of presence provided by the lay ecclesial pastoral team held our parish community together when our leadership was in flux. We relied on each other for support and kept the mission of hospitality, inclusion, and the love of God and our neighbor as our focus.

The ideas shared in this project are a challenge to the status quo in our ministries. The view into the music ministry and parish life of the Cathedral Basilica is not an example of perfection, but a living witness as an intercultural community that is deeply committed to care for its members, the extended community of Santa Fe, and the global community of the Church. As with any garden, the ministries of the Cathedral Basilica are in need of constant pruning and redirection. Present in all ministries are areas of concern that need further evaluation and reworking. The point of this challenge to create ministries and celebrations of inclusion, hospitality, and an intercultural parish is to fully express and manifest the spirit of the Vatican II reforms. In *Making Room, Recovering Hospitality in Christian Tradition*, Christine Pohl writes, “A life of hospitality begins in worship, with the recognition of God’s grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God’s love and welcome to us. Although it involves responsibility and faithful performance of duties, hospitality emerges from a grateful heart. Our hospitality both reflects and participates in God’s hospitality. It depends on a disposition of love because, fundamentally, hospitality is simply love in action.”³⁰ With intentional care, visionary leadership, prayerful discernment, creative cooperative work, and full pastoral leadership team and parish commitment, we can move away from what divides us and closer to an interwoven, inclusive, intercultural expression in our liturgical celebrations and pastoral ministry.

30. Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 172.

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