

**MUSIC IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM:  
A BLUEPRINT FOR THE RENEWAL OF LITURGICAL MUSIC**  
(from the *Advisory Committee on Church Music* of the  
*Irish Episcopal Commission for Liturgy*)

The Advisory Committee on Church Music of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy has been exploring the role of a coordinator for music at a diocesan level. The Committee has consulted widely with many people who have responsibility for music in different parts of the country. In our discussions and meetings we have been building up the profile of a Diocesan Director of Music. In describing the role of the Director here, the Committee has listed many tasks already being done by Directors, at least in part. This document offers suggestions and guidelines regarding the coordinating role of the Diocesan Director.

### **Sacred Music**

Pope John Paul II addressed the participants in the International Congress of Sacred Music including composers, musicians, specialists in liturgy and teachers of sacred music on 27 January 2001. In his talk to them in French, Spanish, English and Italian, the Pope underscored the history of sacred music and the multiple forms it has taken over the centuries in the Church, including Gregorian Chant, polyphony and popular religious music. He recalled that it was "following the ancient Jewish tradition, in which Christ and the disciples were nourished, that sacred music developed throughout the centuries on all continents, according to the genius of each culture, and showing the magnificent creative élan displayed by the various liturgical families of East and West."

This rich heritage needs to be nourished at a local level and local efforts require the support of the Diocese by way of structures, resources and funding. The formation of a Music Commission or Advisory Committee makes it easier for the Diocese to promote liturgical music and assists the Director in the co-ordination of Diocesan initiatives. The Music Committee should ideally be linked with other Diocesan Pastoral Agencies and groups involved specifically in the liturgy. Realistically, in some parts of the country a regional director of music might work within an inter-diocesan structure sharing resources with a number of commissions. The description of the role of the Diocesan Director of Music presupposes the existence of these supportive structures and resources.

### **The Diocesan Director of Music**

The Diocesan Director of Music develops a strategic view of liturgical music in the diocese, analyses and plans for its future needs and further development within the local, diocesan, national and international context. He/she works within the Diocesan Commissions for Sacred Music and Liturgy and under the authority of the Bishop within the norms laid down by the competent liturgical authority.

## The Director

- creates a vision and purpose for liturgical music within the diocese in keeping with the spirit of liturgical renewal of recent decades;
- leads by example, provides inspiration and motivation, and secures the commitment of all those involved in music ministry within the Diocese to this vision and purpose;
- promotes an approach to liturgical music which values above all else the active participation of congregations while at the same time supporting the role of music groups and choirs;
- develops effective links within the Diocese, with other dioceses and with national bodies for professional support and setting of direction;
- actively supports national initiatives in the area of liturgical music, encompassing the promotion of our own cultural heritage in this area.
- motivates and supports music ministers in developing expertise in their respective roles through high-quality courses (e.g. as coordinator of cantor workshops, choral workshops and organ training);
- plans, co-ordinates and supports work undertaken by groups, choirs and individuals involved in the music ministry within the diocese;
- is aware of his/her own need for ongoing personal/professional formation in keeping up to date with developments in liturgical music and in liturgy generally (e.g. revision of rites, publications of guidelines) and can reasonably expect to be facilitated in availing of opportunities to further this formation;
- is available as an advisor/resource person to assist in the implementation of developments in liturgical music;
- is available on occasions to work in deaneries, parishes, schools and religious communities, and to assist with their liturgical celebrations and/or the planning of them; assists, on occasions, with the planning of diocesan liturgical celebrations;
- acts as diocesan consultant on organs and other parish instruments, on copyright, and on all other aspects of liturgical music; works with others to recruit and deploy music ministers of the highest quality;
- advises on the appointment of music ministers in parishes throughout the diocese;
- provides information, advice and support to the Bishop and others in order to meet their responsibilities for liturgical development in the Diocese and beyond;
- monitors and reviews the range, quality, quantity and use of all available resources in order to improve the quality of liturgical music in all
- liturgical celebrations e.g. funerals, weddings, baptisms etc.;
- presents, when requested to do so, a coherent and accurate report of the state of liturgical music in the Diocese.

## **Advisory Committee on Church Music**

In drawing up this paper we are aware that we are presenting an ideal which may take some time to realise. However, the Advisory Committee on Church Music would be very pleased to assist in any way the attainment of these goals. We will be facilitating the setting up of Diocesan structures as envisaged above in a number of pilot schemes and will report the progress of this initiative. We would be grateful to hear your response to this presentation and to incorporate your ideas where possible into any future document.

### **Advice Re: Advertising/Appointment of a Diocesan Director/ Coordinator of Music**

Consideration should first be given as to whether the appointment should be full-time or part-time. A job-sharing option may initially be more appropriate. Knowledge of liturgy, liturgical music is essential. The candidate should be knowledgeable of Church documents regarding liturgy and sacred music, be able to devise and implement appropriate programmes for diocesan/Episcopal liturgies, have good communication skills, and be comfortable working in a team environment.

Candidates should be aware of the programmes in liturgy and music that are available, e.g. degree in music, Diploma and Higher Diploma in Pastoral Liturgy (National Centre for Liturgy/Pontifical University, Maynooth); the M.Th. specialisation in liturgy (Maynooth); Diploma in Arts (Church Music) (NUI Maynooth). Experience in parish or diocesan liturgical ministry is an important factor. Salary is negotiable and commensurate with education and experience e.g. equivalent of a teacher's salary.