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Cover Page Footnote

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James MacMillan's *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* and the Culture of Liturgical Music Making in the Scottish Catholic Church

Michael Ferguson

Sir James MacMillan is one of Scotland's most successful living composers. His Roman Catholic faith is well documented, and it has informed much of his musical output. Scholars have paid considerable attention to MacMillan's concert works in recent decades, but they have devoted comparatively little attention to his music for congregations. Stephen Kingsbury has sought to address this recently by demonstrating how two of MacMillan's congregational Mass settings for the Roman Catholic liturgy, *St Anne's Mass* (1985) and *The Galloway Mass* (1996), share musical material with some of the composer's nonliturgical works.¹ By highlighting their respective pairings with *The Tryst* (1984) and *Ninian* (1996), Kingsbury shows how MacMillan's use of "autoquotation" imbues the settings with a layer of extramusical meaning that can resonate with the worshipper on emotional and spiritual levels.² In his 2016 article, Kingsbury writes about MacMillan's "four settings of the Mass text."³ However, as of 2014, MacMillan had actually composed seven settings of the Roman

Catholic Mass.⁴ Of the four that Kingsbury mentions, he writes:

Despite their commonality of genre, each of the four is vastly different from the other three. Although all four are easily at home in the service of worship, his *Mass* (2000) and *Missa Brevis* (2008) [sic]⁵ are equally suitable for a concert setting. The remaining two, *St Anne's Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, are unique in that they are intended solely to be service music.⁶

There is potential here for confusion, in that Kingsbury does not differentiate clearly enough between MacMillan's explicitly *congregational* Mass settings—those intended to be sung by a worshipping congregation—and his explicitly *noncongregational* settings—which are intended to be sung by skilled choirs in the liturgy, or with an orchestra in a concert setting.⁷ In fact, all seven of MacMillan's Mass settings can be divided in this way: the noncongregational settings are *Missa Brevis* (composed 1977, first published in complete form 2007); *Mass* (2000, revised with new English translation 2012); *Missa Dunelmi*

⁴ In addition to the four settings mentioned by Kingsbury, these settings include *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* (2010), *Missa Dunelmi* (2011), and *Little Mass* (2014).

⁵ The publication date for *Missa Brevis* is 2007, not 2008.

⁶ Kingsbury, "Aesthetic Meaning," 79.

⁷ Later Kingsbury remarks that "although both *St Anne's Mass* and *The Galloway Mass* contain material to be sung by the church choir, they also contain a significant amount of music intended to be sung by the congregation" (ibid., 80). However, this too misses the point that these settings are *primarily* congregational, with optional choir.

¹ Stephen Kingsbury, "Aesthetic Meaning in the Congregational Mass of James MacMillan," *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 2/1 (2016): 79–100.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 79. Kingsbury specifies the four settings as: *Mass* (2000), *Missa Brevis* (2007), *St Anne's Mass* (1985, rev. 1996, though he does not mention the later 2011 revision), and *The Galloway Mass* (1996).

(2011); and *Little Mass* (2014).⁸ MacMillan's congregational settings comprise the two that Kingsbury examines in his article—*St Anne's Mass* (1985, revised 1996, revised again with new English translation 2011) and *The Galloway Mass* (1996)—as well as a third setting, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* (2010), which Kingsbury does not mention at all.⁹ This third congregational Mass setting is the focus of this article.

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman

MacMillan's *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* is dedicated to the Most Reverend Mario Conti, former archbishop of Glasgow, and was jointly commissioned by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Scotland, and of England and Wales, for the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom in September 2010.¹⁰ It was first performed at the open-air papal Masses in Glasgow, Scotland, on September 16, and in Birmingham, England, on September 19. The work is a setting of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) English translation of the third typical edition of the Roman Missal, which was introduced into the Catholic Anglosphere some 13 months after the pope's U.K. visit, in

November 2011.¹¹ In the run-up to the papal visit, MacMillan characterized *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* as “the first ever setting of the new text,” telling the *Scottish Catholic Observer* some five months before the pope's arrival that “we have stolen the march on the US.”¹² The Mass setting is named after Cardinal John Henry Newman, a prominent nineteenth-century religious figure of importance for Roman Catholicism in England, who was beatified by the pope during his U.K. visit.¹³

In an interview prior to Benedict XVI's arrival in the U.K., MacMillan made it clear that he intended his new Mass setting to be primarily a congregational work: “Although it has to be written in such a way that makes it flexible for a lot of different uses . . . at the bottom level of the *Mass for Blessed John Henry Newman* [sic] . . . it's a congregational line.”¹⁴

In fact, even before its first liturgical performance, MacMillan expressed hope that English-speaking Catholic parishes would continue to sing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* after the papal visit: “When the pope has come and gone, the music will be available for the Catholic Anglosphere in the most simple, lowly parishes. And as long as the parish has a competent organist, and maybe

⁸ James MacMillan, *Missa Brevis* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2007); *Mass* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2000); *Missa Dunelmi* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2011); *Little Mass* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2014).

⁹ James MacMillan, *St Anne's Mass* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1985); *The Galloway Mass* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1996); *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2010).

¹⁰ Benedict XVI was pope until his resignation in 2013. Since then he has held the title of “Pope Emeritus.”

¹¹ International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *The Roman Missal: English Translation According to the Third Typical Edition* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2010).

¹² Liz Leydon and Ian Dunn, “SCO Papal Visit Exclusive,” *Scottish Catholic Observer*, April 30, 2010.

¹³ The beatification took place at the open-air papal service in Cofton Park, Birmingham, on September 19, 2010. For insight into the theology of Newman, see Michael E. Allsopp and Ronald R. Burke, eds., *John Henry Newman: Theology and Reform* (London: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁴ Guardian Music, “James MacMillan on Faith and Music,” YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=169vLkK6VII> (uploaded June 1, 2011).

an energetic cantor, any congregation should be able to sing this.”¹⁵ Nevertheless, in Scotland at least, its first liturgical performance was dogged by controversy, and the setting has subsequently “failed” to take root in parish music making in the way MacMillan hoped. In light of this, he has said that he does not intend to compose another congregational Mass setting, remarking in a recent magazine interview that

I was keen to add my music to the congregational body of work, in the hope that people would want to sing it. I have come to the decision that it was a failure and have decided not to write any more. The culture of liturgy in the Catholic Church in Scotland got too much for me.¹⁶

The main purpose of this article is to consider why MacMillan was apparently unable to add his *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* to the body of congregational music in the Catholic Church in Scotland. It will consider the setting’s suitability as a congregational Mass, both for the 70,000 worshippers who came together for the Glasgow Papal Mass in 2010, and for local Catholic parishes in Scotland. We shall see that from its inception, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* was shaped by closely related factors, which together have resulted in a congregational setting that is more difficult for congregations to learn and sing than MacMillan’s two previous congregational Masses.

Indeed, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* has necessarily had to fulfill two rather different liturgical functions: it was designed as a congregational setting for the Glasgow and Birmingham papal Masses on the one

hand, where it had to foster the sense of national scale and ceremony that the high-profile events demanded. On the other hand, the setting also needed to be realizable in local Catholic parishes up and down the country after the papal visit. As it was one of the earliest settings of the new English translation of the Mass, MacMillan may have felt an obligation to remain completely faithful to the new text, and to avoid the kind of adaptation and omission that he has applied in his previous congregational settings in order to make them easier for a congregation to sing. We shall also see that since composing *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, MacMillan’s approach to composing congregational music has shifted, inspired chiefly by his exposure to the musico-theological ideas of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. In light of this, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* can be understood as MacMillan’s attempt to put the ideas of Benedict XVI into practice in a congregational work. We shall see that in doing so, he has prioritized *aesthetic* concerns over *functional* ones to a much greater extent than in his previous congregational Masses. *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, therefore, blurs some of the norms between MacMillan’s congregational and noncongregational Mass settings—particularly in its lengthy “sing-through” Gloria movement—to the extent that it marks a significant departure from MacMillan’s previous congregational offerings.

We have seen above that MacMillan explicitly blames the “culture of liturgy” in the modern-day Scottish Catholic Church for what he characterizes as the “failure” of his *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* in parishes. Drawing upon interviews with music leaders working in different Catholic parishes in Scotland, the reception and legacy of the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “Truth and Beauty: An Interview with Composer James MacMillan,” *Church Music Quarterly*, June 2015: 30.

setting will be considered as a means of better understanding this liturgical culture.¹⁷ We shall see that many of the music makers interviewed perceive *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* to be technically difficult for their local congregations to sing. Nevertheless, some also perceive MacMillan's setting as failing to resonate with the wider cultural identity of these congregations, citing "elitism" in the face of a Scottish Catholic community that they characterize as "working-class" in its history and cultural outlook. The evidence suggests that *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* is underpinned by an understanding of "beauty," "holiness," and "universality" that is potentially at odds with a local Scottish Catholic culture that prioritizes accessible, "Celtic"-sounding musical styles, has little standardization of repertoire, and is underpinned by wide variation in liturgical-musical education, skill sets, and resources.

Composing Roman Catholic Liturgical Music in the Twenty-first Century: Defining "Quality" and "Authenticity" in Music for the Mass

Composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* necessarily required James MacMillan to

¹⁷ To some extent, Thomas Day deals with the question of "culture" in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States in his controversial *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste* (New York: Crossroad, 1990, rev. 2013). Day takes as his starting point the people—clergy, music makers, composers, publishers, parishioners—who create and perpetuate that culture. In doing so, he understands post-Vatican II liturgical music, and the failure of American Catholic congregations to engage with it in singing, in terms of the relationships, power, statuses, and hierarchies that liturgical music making can foster, affirm, and challenge. Notably, however, his "personal, somewhat autobiographical book" (p. 5) lacks empirical data (beyond his own personal experience as a church musician) to support his assertions.

grapple with age-old concerns that have underpinned the debate about music in the Roman Catholic liturgy. In particular, for composers wishing to contribute new music to the liturgy, or for those tasked with selecting music for the Mass, the question of how one might define "quality" and "authenticity" in liturgical music is an important yet potentially problematic consideration.

Over the last 50 years, these issues have played out in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (sometimes known as "Vatican II").¹⁸ A central purpose of the Council was to effect a "reform and promotion of the liturgy,"¹⁹ and the resulting changes to the Mass were felt by every Catholic parish in the world.²⁰ In his *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations*, Anthony Ruff points out that the Council Fathers' instructions on music can essentially be reduced to two overarching mandates: on one hand, the Council promoted music making as an effective means of enabling the "full, conscious and active participation" of the faithful in the liturgy, particularly in congregational singing, which was a cornerstone of the wider liturgical reforms.²¹

¹⁸ The Council convened in four sessions in Rome between October 11, 1962 and December 8, 1965.

¹⁹ See Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), December 4, 1963, art. 1 in *The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004), 3.

²⁰ For example, the vernacular language of the people was now permitted in the Mass alongside Latin. See Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 36.

²¹ See, for example, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, art. 114, which states that "bishops and other pastors of souls, must be at pains to ensure that whenever a liturgical service is to be celebrated with song, the whole assembly of the faithful is enabled . . . to contribute the active participation that rightly belongs to it." *The Liturgy Documents*, 25.

On the other hand, it also called for the “treasure of sacred music”—the historical repertory of plainchant, polyphony, and sacred choral music—to be “preserved and fostered with great care.”²² Ruff rightly acknowledges that these mandates potentially stand in direct opposition to each other, given that much of the church’s historical repertoire was designed for performance by highly skilled professional musicians, rather than untrained congregations.²³ In fact, the Council Fathers’ side-by-side presentation of these mandates was an attempt to formalize a “compromise solution” between the different priorities for music that had existed at Vatican II.²⁴ Nevertheless, as Ruff points out, these perspectives—and the inherent tensions between them—are presented by the Council in largely unreconciled form.²⁵

Implementing the Council’s Instructions on Music: Different Perspectives on “Holiness,” “Beauty,” and “Universality”

The inherent tensions in the Council’s mandates have fueled a debate since Vatican II about how musicians might best realize the instructions in practical terms. In his in-depth examination of nine of the key twentieth-

century church documents on music, Jan Michael Joncas notes that while all are in agreement that liturgical music should glorify God and sanctify the faithful, they nevertheless vary in their understandings of how it should achieve this.²⁶ In their attempts to negotiate the tensions, Catholic musicians have often tended to prioritize one or other of the Council’s two central mandates on music. This has resulted in two broad approaches to postconciliar music making, each of which is underpinned by a rather different liturgical-musical “worldview,” which itself is characterized by rather different notions of “quality” and “authenticity.” To a large extent, these approaches are also characterized by different understandings of the meaning of “holiness,” “beauty,” and “universality”—three closely intertwined concepts that have

²² See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which states: “The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art [art. 112]. . . . The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care [art. 114]. . . . Composers, filled with the Christian spirit, should feel that their vocation is to develop sacred music and to increase its store of treasures [art. 121].” *The Liturgy Documents*, 24–26.

²³ See Ruff, *Sacred Music and Liturgical Reform: Treasures and Transformations* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2007), especially chaps. 15 and 16.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Namely in the document *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, where a whole chapter is devoted to music, and the Council Fathers’ 1967 follow-up document, *Musica Sacram*. See *ibid.*

²⁶ See Jan Michael Joncas, *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music: Twentieth-Century Understandings of Roman Catholic Worship Music* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), where the author examines *Tra le sollecitudini* (1903); *Musicae sacrae disciplina* (1955); *Instructio de Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia* (1958); *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963); *Musica Sacram* (1967); *Music in Catholic Worship* (1972); *Liturgical Music Today* (1982); *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report* (1992); and *The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music* (1995). The Council’s instructions on music were originally promulgated in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. However, the appearance of the Council’s *Musica Sacram* shortly after its close is testament to the difficulties that were experienced almost immediately as Roman Catholics sought to put the instructions into practice. The preface of *Musica Sacram* alludes to some of these early challenges: “The decisions of the Council have already begun to be put into effect in the recently undertaken liturgical renewal. But the new norms concerning the arrangement of the sacred rites and the active participation of the faithful have given rise to several problems regarding sacred music and its ministerial role. These problems appear to be able to be solved by expounding more fully upon certain relevant principles of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.” See Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instructio de Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia* (Instruction on Sacred Music and the Sacred Liturgy) (given March 5, 1967), art. 1.

formed an important backdrop to the debate about the evaluation of Catholic music throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, though with roots lying long before this.²⁷

The first of the two approaches, which has informed the mainstream of postconciliar music making to perhaps the greatest extent since Vatican II, has tended to attach primary importance to the Council Fathers' call for music to enable the "full, conscious and active

participation" of the faithful.²⁸ In this worldview, the notion of quality is most closely aligned to music's functional role in the Mass—primarily its ability to allow the congregation to sing—while "holiness," "beauty," and "universality" are generally understood to be *relative* concepts, the meanings of which can be shaped by a particular liturgical, congregational, or cultural context. Crucially, aesthetic quality and artistic excellence are generally of less importance per se.

For the musicians and liturgists in the international study group *Universa Laus*, for example, liturgical music should be "at the service of the people gathered together to celebrate."²⁹ While they acknowledge that there is legitimate demand for "beauty" and "holiness" in liturgical forms, these concepts are not understood as universally applicable across all congregations and contexts, but rather are closely tied to "the 'values' that each group considers as essential."³⁰ Likewise, the

²⁷ The roots of these concepts in the Christian tradition lie long before the twentieth century—for example, in the Platonic concept of *musica universalis*, whereby proportion and beauty in music are understood to be a direct manifestation of a universal, inherently sacred order, intimately connecting body, soul, and the cosmos. For an interesting overview, see Jeremy Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in a World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), chap. 3. See also Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, "The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31/2 (Winter 1972): 165–80, for an insight into the rise of the ancient "Great Theory" of beauty and its decline, particularly in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, in the early twentieth century, the notions of "holiness," "beauty," and "universality" found particular expression in Pope Pius X's 1903 *motu proprio Tra le sollecitudini* (Among the Concerns), which set the terms of debate in the period before Vatican II. The purpose of Pope Pius X's intervention on music is clear: to present principles of reform in order to eliminate the perceived inappropriate musical practices and repertoire of previous centuries. In doing so, the pope proposes the threefold qualities of "holiness," "beauty," and "universality" as ideal characteristics of liturgical music, though, as we shall see below, the meaning of these was not fixed in the twentieth century. See Pope Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini*, promulgated November 22, 1903; <http://www.adoremus.org/TraLeSollecitudini.html>.

²⁸ The drive for "active participation" at the Council can be traced to the influence of the Liturgical Movement, which emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century, and which sought to renew the liturgical life of the Roman Catholic Church. One of the movement's key priorities was to increase the participation of the faithful in the Mass. During the early decades of the twentieth century the drive to put this participation into practice moved from attempts to facilitate a popular understanding of an inherited liturgy that was perceived to be unchangeable, toward a drive to reform the liturgy itself in order to facilitate participation. See Ruff, *Sacred Music*, 236–42. See also n. 41 below for a brief discussion of the different implications of "active participation."

²⁹ See *Universa Laus*, *Music in Christian Celebration* (1980), "Beliefs Held in Common," Point No. 4; <http://universalaus.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/1-document-ul-uk.pdf>. For a history of the international study group for liturgical music formed in 1967, see the group's website: <http://universalaus.org/history/>.

³⁰ *Universa Laus*, *Music in Christian Celebration* (1980), "Beliefs Held in Common," Point No. 40.

musicians and liturgists who contributed to “The Milwaukee Report” in 1992—the result of a ten-year dialogue among participants in the Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers—agree that the specific liturgical context should determine what music is most appropriate for the Mass.³¹ The church’s historical repertoire of sacred art music, therefore, has “no intrinsic musical superiority,” but rather works of liturgical music in all styles should be judged primarily on their ability “to serve the rite and enable the people’s prayer through their full, conscious and active participation.”³²

Scholars have also echoed these perspectives. American philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff, for example, though not writing specifically about Roman Catholic music, ponders how we should think about church music in the midst of difficult questions about quality. He reaches the conclusion that we should think of it as primarily “serving” the liturgy.³³ Addressing the issue of function, he argues that all art is functional to some extent, and that while music can be “multi-functional,” nevertheless it only comes “into its own” when it serves its *proper* function.³⁴ “Fittingness” for liturgical action, then, is more important than aesthetic standards or musical style, and for Wolterstorff it is particularly desirable for liturgical music to fit comfortably within the “ears” of the worshipping community.³⁵

³¹ *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report* (“The Milwaukee Report”) (1992); <http://www.archmil.org/ArchMil/Resources/TheMilwaukeeStatement.pdf>.

³² “The Milwaukee Report,” art. 60.

³³ Nicholas P. Wolterstorff, “Thinking about Church Music,” in Charlotte Kroeker, ed., *Music in Christian Worship* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

Anthony Ruff is also clear that in evaluating music for the postconciliar Catholic Mass, “conceptually liturgy comes before music.”³⁶ For Ruff, the functions of liturgical music are the functions of the liturgy itself: “glorifying God,” “sanctifying the faithful,” “fostering festivity in liturgical celebration,” “enhancing the proclamation of the Word,” “strengthening bonds of community,” and “promoting participation.”³⁷ While he acknowledges that “fostering cultural and artistic goods” can also be a legitimate function of the liturgy (and therefore of liturgical music), he nevertheless warns that this should not be given precedence over its other, more important functions. In the midst of the Council’s competing calls for active participation and the fostering of the treasure of sacred music, Ruff concludes that not all of the church’s inherited repertoire can survive intact after the reforms of Vatican II. There is “no absolute model of worship music in the Roman liturgy,” he tells us, and it is clear that if one is to meet the Council’s call for the preservation and fostering of the treasury of sacred works, “some degree of incongruity, paradox, and contradiction is inevitable.”³⁸

Alongside this, another liturgical-musical worldview has existed after Vatican II that has generally given more priority to the Council Fathers’ call for the historical repertory of chant, polyphony, and sacred choral music to

³⁶ Ruff, *Sacred Music*, 1. Joseph Swain (discussed below) also points out Ruff’s primarily theological perspective, which Swain describes as a “cardinal error.” See Swain, *Sacred Treasure: Understanding Catholic Liturgical Music* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 14.

³⁷ Ruff, *Sacred Music*, 8–18.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 610.

be preserved and fostered.³⁹ This has often been underpinned by an understanding of “holiness,” “beauty,” and “universality” as objective, universally definable concepts, rather than relative ones.⁴⁰ Likewise, music makers, clergy, and scholars coming from this perspective have tended to attach more importance to aesthetic quality and artistic excellence, and while they have generally acknowledged the Council’s call for “active participation,” the notion of active listening is sometimes promoted as an equally valid mode

of congregational participation.⁴¹ All styles of liturgical music are not necessarily perceived as equally “authentic,” and close continuity with the repertoire of historical works is strongly encouraged, even in newly composed music.

The signatories of the 1995 *Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music*, for example, actively reject the relativistic positions of the *Universa Laus* and “Milwaukee Report” groups, and assert instead that “the difficulty of definitively stating the objective elements of musical quality is not an excuse for avoiding the issue or proof of the relativity of musical judgements.”⁴² In fact, the authors call for renewed attention to “beauty,” “excellence,” and “aesthetically high quality music” in the liturgy, which they believe can be objectively defined. Edward Schaefer has also affirmed the importance of aesthetic beauty and “authentic” musical styles, writing in his 2008 *Catholic Music through the Ages: Balancing the Needs of a Worshipping Church* that “we have for the better part of the last two generations

³⁹ Though arguably this has been a minority approach, at least in practice in the English-speaking church. Jan Michael Joncas, for example, wrote in 1997 that “in spite of the exhortations of SC [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*] and the post-Vatican II implementation documents, the treasury of sacred music consisting of Gregorian chant, Ars Nova and Renaissance polyphony, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic Masses, Requiems, and motets has almost completely disappeared from the Roman Rite worship.” See Joncas, *From Sacred Song to Ritual Music*, 113.

⁴⁰ As Anthony Ruff points out, to some extent the notion of an objectively definable, inherently sacred music has its roots in the Cecilian reform and plainchant revival movements in the second half of the nineteenth century, which sought to recover an “authentic” church music in the face of the perceived corruptive influences of the secular opera house and concert hall. By looking to music of the past—either in drawing upon early print sources or in composing new music in old styles—the reformers conceived of an objectively beautiful, universal music repertoire, free from corruptive secular influences, and intrinsically “holy” by virtue of its style and/or provenance. See Ruff, *Sacred Music*, chaps. 6 and 7.

⁴¹ In fact, perspectives on “active participation” range from those who essentially see physical singing as the only valid form of participation in the postconciliar liturgy (see, for example, Bernard Huijbers, *The Performing Audience: Six and a Half Essays on Music and Song in the Liturgy*, 2nd ed., rev. Huijbers and Redmond McGoldrick [Phoenix: North American Liturgy Resources, 1980]), to those who see active listening to a professional choir as being equally valid participation (see, for example, Martin Baker, “The Role of the Choir in the Celebration of the Liturgy: Notes on the Experience at Westminster Cathedral,” *Sacred Music* 135/4 (2008): 8–13). Indeed, the precise meaning of the Council’s term *participatio actuosa* has been the subject of debate, with some arguing that a translation of “actual participation,” rather than “active participation,” better takes into account internal participation, alongside external action.

⁴² *The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music* (Salt Lake City, UT: Madeleine Institute, 1995). art. 6; <http://www.canticanova.com/articles/liturgy/art901.htm>.

encouraged and even inculcated principles of relativism with regard to musical judgement that declare that there are no qualitative absolutes.”⁴³ Rather, Schaefer is clear that “the current doctrines that claim all musical styles are qualitatively equal must be exposed for the rationalization of poor quality and often egocentric music that they are.”⁴⁴ The Roman Catholic Church, he tells us, has sought to balance the “formative” and “expressive” dimensions of liturgical music throughout its history. Nevertheless, the church has apparently lost this balance in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, whereby liturgical music’s formative function has been subordinated to its expressive one. However, this balance can be restored, Schaefer advises, by re-establishing three basic principles that have formed the basis for the evaluation of liturgical music in the church’s history: liturgical music must stay true to its long-established “core values”; these values are “most perfectly embodied” in Gregorian chant; and crucially, music for the liturgy should be of the highest artistic quality.⁴⁵ Organist and scholar Gerard Gillen agrees. In his article “Towards a Definition of ‘Good’ Liturgical Music,”⁴⁶ he argues that while music must be subservient to the wider liturgical ritual, and must necessarily play a functional role in the Mass, nevertheless aesthetic beauty and artistic excellence are essential parts of this ritual function.⁴⁷

⁴³ Edward Schaefer, *Catholic Music through the Ages: Balancing the Needs of a Worshipping Church* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2008), 182.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 160–64.

⁴⁶ Gerard Gillen, “Towards a Definition of ‘Good’ Liturgical Music,” in *Anáil Dé: The Breath of God: Music, Ritual and Spirituality* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2001), 189–200.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

Joseph Swain also rejects relativistic approaches in defining quality music for the Mass. Instead, he aims to present a “rational” theory for the evaluation of liturgical music, which takes the “hard facts of music” as its starting point—in other words, the basic elements of music such as melody, harmony, instrumentation, and rhythm.⁴⁸ For Swain, no music is inherently sacred, though liturgical music can possess an objectively definable “sacred semantic,” which arises from it being both distinct from music in the surrounding secular culture, and having developed long-time associations with the liturgy.⁴⁹

James MacMillan and the Musico-theological Ideals of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

In composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, James MacMillan had to chart a course through these competing liturgical-musical discourses. As such, he was confronted by some of the same fundamental questions that face composers of any new Mass setting for the postconciliar liturgy: How might the work fulfill the Council Fathers’ call for “active participation” (and how will this “active participation” be defined)? What will be the relationship of the newly composed work to the church’s historical treasury of sacred art music? And how will the new work relate to its local cultural and liturgical

⁴⁸ Swain, *Sacred Treasure*, xiv.

⁴⁹ Swain’s notion of a “sacred semantic” seems to imply that this is applicable universally across different liturgical contexts and communities. However, it is interesting to note that at least one major empirical study of postconciliar Catholic music has shown that even within a single congregation, worshippers can perceive the same piece of liturgical music in rather different ways; see Elizabeth Louise Theobald, “Music in Roman Catholic Liturgies in England and Wales since Vatican II” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 1997), especially chaps. 4 and 6.

context? Underpinning all of these questions is the issue of how the work might balance *function* in the liturgy—particularly in enabling the congregation to sing—with the *aesthetic qualities* of the work itself.

There is evidence to suggest that in composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, MacMillan took rather a different approach to balancing these concerns, compared to his previous congregational Masses. As MacMillan himself explains, his thinking regarding liturgical music shifted in the period prior to his composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*:

I've always written for choirs but I would say that my more focused interest began in the mid-decade, 2004/5, with a thought towards the Roman Catholic liturgy, the state of it, and its potential; its tradition and how I might contribute to it as a composer myself. That meant not just thinking about advanced and easy choral music but also very, very simple congregational music and how that fitted into the tradition.⁵⁰

By MacMillan's own account, his changed approach to liturgical music was inspired by his exposure to the ideas of Joseph Ratzinger, who became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005:

But I suppose my experience has been life-long, although without much general thought—which I think is the way for most people that are involved. But then, I suppose I just started reading more—reading *The Spirit of the Liturgy* by Ratzinger was a huge influence, and through [Fr.] Aidan Nichols's guidance—Aidan had been introducing Ratzinger into the Anglosphere since the 1980s. He was introducing him and bringing him to Oxford. And nobody really knew who he was then, but Aidan did, and wrote about

him; he was kind of Ratzinger's man in the U.K., as it were.⁵¹

Father Aidan Nichols was the Roman Catholic chaplain of Edinburgh University while MacMillan was an undergraduate in the early 1980s. He mentions Nichols's own book *Looking at the Liturgy* (1996) as another major influence on him.⁵² Joseph Ratzinger, on the other hand, rose to prominence as a theologian, academic, and prolific writer on all aspects of the Roman Catholic liturgy before ascending to the papacy in 2005.⁵³ His views on music strongly echo (and potentially also inspire) those perspectives we have encountered above, which emphasize “holiness,” “beauty,” and “universality” as objectively definable concepts. Indeed, Ratzinger strongly rejects the relativism that, he claims, has informed liturgical music making since the Second Vatican Council. Rather, he urges a rededication to what he sees as the objective standards of beauty and universality, which can give rise to “authentic” liturgical music, and which he argues are most perfectly embodied in Gregorian chant and vocal polyphony. Crucially, while he writes

⁵¹ James MacMillan interview with the author in Glasgow on November 27, 2013. See the section “Interviews with Scottish Catholic Music Leaders” below for more discussion of the methods involved in carrying out this interview.

⁵² Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of Its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996). Nichols was assistant Catholic chaplain to Edinburgh University from 1977 to 1981, and senior Catholic chaplain to the university from 1981 to 1983. MacMillan graduated from Edinburgh University in 1982.

⁵³ See, for example, Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986); *A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today* (New York: Crossroad, 1996); and *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), where he presents his understanding of the reformed liturgy, including the nature and role of sacred music in the postconciliar church.

⁵⁰ James MacMillan interview with Rebecca Tavener, Hyperion Records website; http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/dc.asp?dc=D_CKD383.

that newly composed liturgical music does not necessarily need to imitate these styles, he sees polyphony and plainchant as effective “road signs,” which can provide “orientation” for the liturgical composer.⁵⁴

Ratzinger’s elevation to the papacy led to his writings gaining a new impetus and authority. Many of the principles he expounds have resonated most strongly with those who have been critical of the direction that the Roman Catholic liturgy has taken since the Second Vatican Council, and who have called for a rededication to more traditional styles and approaches.⁵⁵ The arrival of Pope Benedict XVI lent these clergy and musicians a new sense of optimism and confidence, while for others, Ratzinger’s elevation to the papacy was a worrying indication of a more conservative turn in the Roman Catholic Church.⁵⁶ MacMillan explains that his own “more focussed interest” coincided with the

arrival of this new, relatively conservative pope:

It got me thinking and reading a great deal, studying liturgy, reading the documents from Vatican II and realizing what had happened in the last forty years, and understanding that the situation is still very fluid and that one can actually make one’s mark on the development of church music according to authentic practices, as I would now see it.⁵⁷

In light of this, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* could be seen as just such an attempt by MacMillan to “make [his] mark” on the development of congregational music in the Scottish Catholic Church, in line with Benedict XVI’s notions of “authentic” liturgical music. MacMillan himself has spoken of there being a “different sound” to the setting, and in his attempt to put into practice the ideals of Benedict XVI, he has arguably composed a congregational Mass that departs from *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass* in style and compositional approach.

MacMillan’s *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* as a Congregational Mass Setting

Before examining *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* in more detail, it is worth outlining some of the normative differences between MacMillan’s previous congregational settings and his noncongregational Mass settings.

The congregational Masses are intended to be sung by untrained congregations in worship, and as such, they are designed around a unison melody line, with organ accompaniment. In general, these settings embody a relatively simple “Celtic”-sounding compositional style that sets them apart from MacMillan’s main body of compositional

⁵⁴ Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 158–59.

⁵⁵ It is important to understand that Ratzinger’s principles have their roots in much older ideas about liturgy and music, going back, for example, to the three ideal characteristics of liturgical music proposed by Pope Pius X in his 1903 *motu proprio Tra le sollicitudini*—holiness, beauty, and universality—and even to the plainchant revival and Cecilian reform movements of the nineteenth century, which principally looked to music of the past to inform liturgical music making in the present and future (see also nn. 27 and 40 above).

⁵⁶ It is interesting to consider how the “conservative” confidence that Pope Benedict XVI’s arrival potentially inspired has changed in light of his resignation and the arrival of Pope Francis—often regarded as a more liberal pope, and certainly less overtly interested in liturgy. By way of just one example, it is interesting to note that Damien Thompson, editor in chief of the *Catholic Herald* and associate editor of the (London) *Spectator*, describes the arrival of Pope Francis as “taking the wind out of our sails” for conservative and traditionalist Catholic bloggers, who were otherwise using the internet as a “mighty instrument” during the reign of Benedict XVI. See Damien Thompson, “The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Blogosphere,” *Catholic Herald*, July 30, 2015; <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/issues/july-31-2015/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-catholic-blogosphere/>.

⁵⁷ James MacMillan interview with Rebecca Tavener.

output. All MacMillan's congregational Masses are accompanied by organ, and while they include material for four-part choir, crucially, this is always optional.⁵⁸ This enables a choir to harmonize with the congregation if desired—normally in homophonic textures, with the choir sopranos doubling the congregational melody—but the settings are equally performable without this choral augmentation, simply using a cantor and congregation. Each of the congregational Masses uses an English-language translation of the Mass texts.⁵⁹ MacMillan sometimes uses devices that can aid the singing of the work for a large untrained group—for example, call-and-response phrases that alternate between cantor/priest and congregation,⁶⁰ or the setting of short refrains for the congregation, with longer portions of the text being sung by a solo cantor (particularly the lengthy Gloria text).⁶¹ Compared to the noncongregational settings, MacMillan's congregational Masses have a relatively simple, triadic harmonic language that is generally low in dissonance and tonally very stable. Likewise, the congregational settings exhibit comparatively low rhythmic complexity, both in their vocal writing and in their organ accompaniments.⁶² Example 1 shows an excerpt of the Sanctus of

St Anne's Mass, which demonstrates its relatively simple congregational style, with optional choir.

MacMillan's noncongregational Mass settings, on the other hand, are composed for skilled, usually professional choirs.⁶³ In the broadest of terms, the style of these settings is much more in keeping with MacMillan's main output of concert music, which is essentially art music.⁶⁴ As such, it is characterized by originality, complexity, and concern for high aesthetic quality.⁶⁵ The noncongregational settings are designed for mixed-voice vocal ensembles ranging from SATB to SSAATTBB that, depending on the particular setting, are either a cappella, or with organ or orchestral accompaniment.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, the noncongregational settings all lack a congregational melody line, and have no optional choir parts.

⁵⁸ This optional choir material does not necessarily appear in every movement of the settings (for example, the Kyrie and Agnus Dei of *St Anne's Mass* are unison voices only, as is the Sanctus of *The Galloway Mass*).

⁵⁹ The original 1985 version of *St Anne's Mass* used the 1973 ICEL (International Commission on English in the Liturgy) English translation, though it was revised in 2011 to take into account the new 2010 ICEL translation. *The Galloway Mass* is also a setting of the 1973 ICEL translation, while *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, as we have already seen, is a setting of the 2010 ICEL translation.

⁶⁰ For example, the Kyrie of *The Galloway Mass*.

⁶¹ For example, the Gloria of *The Galloway Mass*.

⁶² In other words, regular meters and beat accents, and rhythms that are often repetitive and relatively predictable.

⁶³ A comparison of the "difficulty rating" of each Mass setting as listed by Boosey & Hawkes gives some insight into the differences in performance difficulty between the congregational and noncongregational settings. The noncongregational Masses are listed as follows (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is most difficult): *Missa Brevis* 3; *Mass* 3, Agnus Dei 4; *Missa Dunelmi* 4/5; *Little Mass* (not listed). The difficulty ratings of the congregational settings, on the other hand, are listed as: *St Anne's Mass* 1; *The Galloway Mass* 1; *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* (not listed). It is also interesting to note also that *Mass* and *Missa Dunelmi* were first performed by the professional Choir of Westminster Cathedral, London, and Durham Cathedral Choir, respectively.

⁶⁴ Though very often, of course, this music draws upon liturgical themes and texts.

⁶⁵ Recent large-scale works for the concert hall include *Stabat Mater* (2015) and *A European Requiem* (2015).

⁶⁶ *Missa Brevis* and *Missa Dunelmi* are scored for mixed voices a cappella. *Mass* is scored for SATB choir plus organ, while *Little Mass* is scored for children's chorus and orchestra.

Example 1: Opening of the Sanctus of *St Anne's Mass*, showing the relatively simple congregational style

measure 5

SOPRANO & CONGREGATION
Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly_ Lord

ALTO
Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly_ Lord

TENOR
Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord

BASS
Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly Lord

ORGAN

Detailed description: This musical score shows measure 5 of the Sanctus. It features five staves: Soprano & Congregation, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Organ. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal parts are in a simple, homophonic style. The lyrics are 'Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly_ Lord'. The organ part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

S.
God of_ hosts, God of_ hosts.

A.
God of hosts, God of hosts, of hosts.

T.
God_ of hosts, God of_ hosts.

B.
God of hosts, God of hosts.

Org.

Detailed description: This musical score shows the beginning of the Benedictus. It features five staves: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), Bass (B.), and Organ (Org.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal parts are in a simple, homophonic style. The lyrics are 'God of_ hosts, God of_ hosts.' for Soprano, 'God of hosts, God of hosts, of hosts.' for Alto, 'God_ of hosts, God of_ hosts.' for Tenor, and 'God of hosts, God of hosts.' for Bass. The organ part provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands.

Example 2: Measures 1–5 of the Sanctus of *Missa Brevis*, showing relatively independent vocal lines for unaccompanied SATB choir (as well as highlighting the absence of a primarily congregational melody)

Moderato

SOPRANO
Sanc - tus, sanc - tus, sanc - tus

ALTO
Sanc - tus, sanc - tus, sanc - tus

TENOR
Sanc - tus, sanc - tus, sanc - tus

BASS
Sanc - tus, sanc - tus, sanc - tus

Instead, they are characterized by independent-voice multipart choral writing, and as such demonstrate much more sophisticated, varied, and technically challenging choral textures. Unlike the congregational Masses, which are all in English, three out of four of MacMillan’s noncongregational Masses use Latin texts.⁶⁷ Three out of four also set the Gloria text of the Mass, which is always treated in a “sing-through” manner.⁶⁸ There is considerable variation in the musical material within the noncongregational settings, and also between them. However, compared to the congregational Masses, they are generally

more harmonically complex, more dissonant, and present a much higher degree of rhythmic complexity and variation in all voice parts, including the instrumental accompaniments, where applicable. Example 2 is a short extract from the Sanctus of *Missa Brevis*, demonstrating the relatively independent lines for unaccompanied SATB choir.

Bearing in mind these differences between MacMillan’s congregational and noncongregational Mass settings, let us now consider *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* in more detail—a setting that marks a departure from MacMillan’s previous congregational settings in its compositional approach, and which consequently is potentially more challenging for a congregation to sing.

Overall Structure and Instrumental Forces

Like MacMillan’s other congregational settings, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* is primarily organized around a unison melody

⁶⁷ It is worth noting, however, that Latin text does appear at the very end of the Agnus Dei of *The Galloway Mass*. Of the noncongregational settings, *Mass* is the exception, being a setting of the 1973 ICEL English Missal text.

⁶⁸ In other words, not in a “refrain” manner, as is the case with *The Galloway Mass*. For more detailed discussion of this, see the section “‘Sing-through’ Gloria Movement” below.

line. As is also typical, it is accompanied by organ throughout, makes use of a cantor, and has optional parts for four-part SATB choir.⁶⁹ Rather untypically, though, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* is also scored for optional brass and timpani ensemble. This is a direct legacy of the setting's first papal performances, where these instruments formed part of the accompaniment at the open-air Masses, alongside organ.⁷⁰

The version of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* first performed in Glasgow and Birmingham consisted of the Gloria, Sanctus, Memorial Acclamations, and Agnus Dei of the Ordinary of the Mass. MacMillan later included a Kyrie and Great Amen in the commercially published version of the setting.⁷¹ Table 1 gives an overview of its basic structure.⁷²

“Sing-through” Gloria Movement

MacMillan's treatment of the Gloria of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*—by far the longest of the four core texts of the Mass Ordinary—represents one of his biggest departures from

previous congregational settings, and is one of the key reasons why it is more difficult for congregations to learn and sing. Indeed, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* includes a “sing-through” setting of the Gloria text—the first of its kind for a MacMillan congregational Mass—which requires the congregation to sing all of the Gloria words from beginning to end.⁷³ In *The Galloway Mass*, for example, MacMillan includes a “refrain” setting of the Gloria, where the majority of the text is sung by a solo cantor (or, optionally, a four-part choir), while the congregation simply interjects a short refrain: “Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth”⁷⁴ (see Ex. 3). Likewise, when originally published, *St Anne's Mass* did not include a setting of the Gloria at all, requiring a congregation only to learn settings of the comparatively short Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei texts in order to fully master the setting.⁷⁵

This “refrain” approach means that the congregation only has to learn a short, highly repetitive phrase. A “sing-through” approach, on the other hand, requires the congregation to sing all of the text, and consequently places significantly more demand on them.

⁶⁹ Solo cantor features in the Kyrie, which can alternatively be sung by the celebrating priest. The Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Acclamations feature four-part optional choir.

⁷⁰ Performing material is available from the publisher, Boosey & Hawkes, for 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, and timpani, which were used during both the Scottish and English open-air papal performances.

⁷¹ James MacMillan, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2010). A plainchant Kyrie from *Missa de Angelis* was sung during the Glasgow papal Mass on September 16, 2010. In the Birmingham service on September 19, the Kyrie was from the plainchant setting *Orbis factor*.

⁷² For comparative tables for *St Anne's Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, see Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 81–82. Note that Kingsbury's table implies that *The Galloway Mass* has a performing time of 6' 16”, which is incorrect (see Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 80, table 1). According to the Boosey & Hawkes listings, the performing time is actually 15'.

⁷³ After publishing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, MacMillan revised his *St Anne's Mass* to set the newly translated English Missal texts, and this new version of the setting, published in 2011, now also includes a “sing-through” setting of the Gloria in a plainchant style. The extent to which Scottish parishes, having previously sung *St Anne's Mass* consisting only of the Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, may have adopted this new Gloria is still largely unknown, and is therefore worthy of future investigation.

⁷⁴ See MacMillan, *The Galloway Mass*, 5–16.

⁷⁵ Presumably the Gloria would be said in this case, or a Gloria from another setting used. See also n. 73 above.

Table 1: Overall Structure: *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*

	Kyrie	Gloria	Sanctus and Benedictus	Acclamations	Great Amen	Agnus Dei
Choral texture	All voices in unison	Unison and optional four-part harmony	Unison and optional four-part harmony	Unison and optional four-part harmony	All voices in unison	Unison and optional four-part harmony
Tempo	Andante moderato	Andante, Quarter = ca. 100	Andante, Quarter = ca. 92	Andante, Quarter = ca. 92	Andante, Quarter = ca. 100	Andante
Length	17 measures	61 measures	50 measures	19 measures	9 measures	39 measures
Meter	4/4	4/4	3/4	3/4	4/4	3/4
Key center	E minor	F-sharp minor (A major)	D major	D major	A major (F-sharp minor)	E minor
Phrase structure	Intro, A, A', B, codetta	A, B, C, D, E, C', F, codetta	Intro, A, A', B, A'', B', B, codetta	Intro, A, B, codetta	Intro, A, A', B	Intro, A, A, B, codetta
Derived from				Sanctus and Benedictus	Gloria	

Example 3: Extract of the Gloria from *The Galloway Mass*, showing MacMillan's use of the congregational refrain

measure 80

The musical score for Example 3 is set in 3/4 time and begins at measure 80. It features a congregational refrain. The parts are as follows:

- CONGREGATION:** A single line of music with rests, indicating that the congregation is silent during this section.
- Either CANTOR:** A vocal line starting with a *mf* dynamic, singing the lyrics "You are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -". The dynamic shifts to *mp* at the end of the phrase.
- SOPRANO ALTO:** A vocal line for soprano and alto voices, mirroring the cantorial melody with a *mf* dynamic.
- or CHOIR:** A vocal line for choir voices, also mirroring the cantorial melody with a *mf* dynamic.
- TENOR BASS:** A vocal line for tenor and bass voices, mirroring the cantorial melody with a *mf* dynamic.
- ORGAN:** An organ accompaniment in the right and left hands, providing harmonic support with a *mp* dynamic.

ff
 Glo-ry to God in the high -
ff
 ceive our prayer. Glo-ry to God in the high -
 ceive our prayer.

11
 -est and peace to His peo-ple on earth. *mf*
 -est and peace to His peo-ple on earth. *mf* For
 For *mf*
mp

However, the “refrain” approach requires a degree of compromise: namely, the Gloria text must be adapted to accommodate the refrain.⁷⁶ Bearing this in mind, it is worth remembering that *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* was intended by MacMillan to be the “first ever” setting of the new English translation of the Mass texts. It is not surprising, therefore, that he avoided adapting this text, and opted instead for a setting that retains the verbatim integrity of the new English translation.⁷⁷

Moreover, the Gloria has the most melodic variation, and is the least rhythmically repetitive, of all the movements of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*. Example 4 shows MacMillan’s setting of three consecutive phrases of the Gloria text. While there is clearly an element of repetition here, nevertheless the subtle variations in rhythm coupled with a changing starting beat placement lend the material a degree of irregularity.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ In other words, the text of the Gloria does not contain a repeating phrase that can be used as a refrain, and so this must be inserted by the composer, effectively altering the sequence of the text.

⁷⁷ In fact, the introduction of the new English translation in 2011 seems to have coincided with a drive by the Bishops’ Conferences of Scotland, and of England and Wales to ensure the textual integrity of new musical settings of the new translation by requiring composers to submit their compositions for review, and to gain an imprimatur in the territory they wish to publish. For an insight into the process in Scotland, see “Roman Missal Scotland: Guide for Composers,” <https://romanmissalScotland.org.uk/2012/10/12/guide-for-composers/>.

⁷⁸ Notice, in particular, the beat placement of each of the three phrases of text: each occurs on a different beat of the measure (first phrase in extract begins beat 1, measure 14; second phrase begins beat 3, measure 16; third phrase begins beat 2, measure 18), resulting in irregular, unpredictable phrasing, which is arguably more difficult for a congregation to sing.

Musical Style

In his analysis of *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, Stephen Kingsbury counts the instances of what he calls “Scottish vernaculars” in the settings, which he says “forge a strong connection to place for the works in which they occur.”⁷⁹ And indeed, *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass* are characterized by overtly “Celtic”-sounding musical idioms.⁸⁰ The Sanctus of *St Anne’s Mass*, for example, which is really the centerpiece of the setting, is a reworking of a Scottish-traditional-style melody that MacMillan composed for his 1984 setting of William Soutar’s love poem *The Tryst*.⁸¹ The folk-inspired theme, complete with “Scottish snap” rhythms (appearing a total of six times), sits alongside the similarly Celtic-sounding, Dorian-mode melodies of the Kyrie and Agnus Dei. Likewise, in *The Galloway Mass*, MacMillan uses *piobaireachd*-style⁸² ornamentation on six different occasions, and Scottish snap rhythms are heard 25 times throughout the setting.⁸³

⁷⁹ See Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 83.

⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that the publisher’s website describes the Sanctus and Benedictus (and the Acclamations, which has the same melody) of *St Anne’s Mass* as having “a very Scottish traditional feel to the melody including a Scotch Snap”; <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/James-MacMillan-St-Anne-s-Mass/7220>. No such details are mentioned about *The Galloway Mass*.

⁸¹ Note that this melody is also used in the Acclamations.

⁸² *Piobaireachd* (or sometimes *Pibroch*) is a form of music exclusively for the great Highland bagpipes. As the classical music of the bagpipes, it is also known as “Ceol Mor” (Big Music), which distinguishes it from other forms of pipe music (jigs, reels, marches, etc.). Essentially the music consists of a theme (or “ground”), with variations encompassing varying degrees of complexity and ornamentation. For more insight into *piobaireachd*, see the website of the Piobaireachd Society of Scotland: <http://www.piobaireachd.co.uk>.

⁸³ See also Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 83.

Example 4: Gloria of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, mm. 14–21, showing variations in the starting beats of the three congregational phrases.

measure 14

CANTOR & CONGREGATION *mf*
 we give you thanks for your great glo - ry, — Lord God, hea-ven-ly King, —

CHOIR (Optional) *mf*
 we give you thanks for your great glo - ry, — Lord God, hea-ven-ly King, —

ORGAN *mf*
 glo - ry, King,

— O God, al - might - y Fa - ther. Lord Je - sus Christ,
 Je - sus Christ,

O God, —

O God,

f

f

f

f

In comparison, there is only one overtly “Scottish” folklike element in *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*—the *poibaireachd*-style organ introduction to the Sanctus (see Ex. 5). As such, self-consciously “Celtic”-sounding elements play a much less important role in defining the overall character of the work.⁸⁴ Compared to the simple “Celtic”-infused styles of MacMillan’s previous congregational settings, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* bears the stylistic hallmarks of Western art music that are more common in his noncongregational settings (which are generally more inventive, less predictable and repetitive, more rhythmically, harmonically, and melodically complex, and more expressively varied). Unlike *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, MacMillan does not obviously quote musical material from his concert works in *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*.⁸⁵ However, the Kyrie of the setting opens with a quotation from the Prelude to Act 3 of Wagner’s opera *Tristan und Isolde* (see Exx. 6a and 6b), again highlighting the influence of Western art music in the

composition, and connecting the setting with MacMillan’s wider oeuvre of art music.⁸⁶

In his analysis, Kingsbury seems to take as unproblematic the notion of “musical vernaculars that stem from traditional Scottish music.”⁸⁷ He can be forgiven for doing so, however, because MacMillan himself seems happy to use the terms “musical vernaculars,” “Scottish traditional music,” and “Celtic music” interchangeably, without much concern.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the issue of “Scottishness” in music is rather more problematic than either Kingsbury or MacMillan suggests.

⁸⁴ Note that the Sanctus organ introduction is marked as “optional” in the published version, although it was performed at both the Scottish and English open-air papal services.

⁸⁵ See Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 83–99, for more discussion about MacMillan’s use of “autoquotation” in *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*.

⁸⁶ In fact, *Tristan und Isolde* is the work most frequently quoted in MacMillan’s musical output of concert works, though Dominic Wells has pointed out that the “meaning” of such material is transformed depending on its context. See Dominic Wells, “James MacMillan: Retrospective Modernist” (Ph.D. thesis, Durham University, 2012), 12. See also MacMillan’s interview with Rebecca Tavener, where he discusses his use of the *Tristan* quotation in *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, and in particular the influence of Roger Scruton’s book *Death-Devoted Heart: Sex and the Sacred in Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁸⁷ Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 83–99.

⁸⁸ Indeed, explaining his use of “Scottish” musical elements in his work, MacMillan has said: “One of the things I’ve managed to do, one of many, is to try an’ absorb what I call musical vernaculars into the music. That is, not in a kind of crossover way, or even a fusion way, but certainly to draw, absorb, on a very deep reservoir of Scottish traditional music, Celtic music, so that it infuses the character of some of the music.” MacMillan interview with Fiona Ritchie, *The Thistle and the Shamrock*, “Classic Collaborations,” Program 950; quoted in Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 83.

Example 5: Organ introduction to the Sanctus of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* showing the influence of Scottish traditional poibaireachd

Andante ♩ = 92

ORGAN

mf joyfully

Example 6a: Opening of the Kyrie of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, drawing on a quotation from the opening of the Prelude to Act 3 of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*

Andante moderato

CANTOR, CHOIR & CONGREGATION

PRIEST/CANTOR *p*

Lord, have mer - cy.

ORGAN *pp*

Example 6b: Keyboard reduction of the opening four measures of the Prelude to Act 3 of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*

Mässig langsam

f

As Matthew Gelbart points out, attempts to objectively define “folk music” have generally ended in “inconsistency, tautology, and ultimately self-contradiction.”⁸⁹ In Scotland, the notion of Scottish folk music is intimately bound with the history of the Scottish nation itself—and as such has been molded by the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious forces that have shaped that nation.⁹⁰ At the heart of the difficulties is the question of “authenticity”—in other words, what musics are authentically Scottish, and why? Simon McKerrell has rightly pointed out that the influence of ethnomusicology over the last century has seen attempts to understand Scottish music move away from a focus on its sonic properties (in other words, “What does Scottish music sound like?”) toward understandings that are rooted in its socio-cultural characteristics (in other words, “When is Scottish traditional music?”).⁹¹

“Authenticity” is clearly a concern for MacMillan, and we shall see below that he casts his *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* in direct opposition to what he perceives as “the kind of cod-Celticness that owes more to the soundtracks of *Lord of the Rings* and *Braveheart*

than anything remotely authentic.”⁹² But this immediately raises the question of what (if anything) differentiates MacMillan’s use of decontextualized “Celtic” music signifiers—the Scottish snap rhythms, modal harmonies, and *poibaireachd*-influenced ornamentation that we have encountered above—from the “cod-Celtic” styles that he has criticized. Does MacMillan’s indictment include a rejection of his own previous congregational Mass settings, and the overtly “Celtic”-intentioned styles that characterize them?⁹³ Certainly, his revising of *St Anne’s Mass* in 2011 to ensure its viability in light of the new translation suggests that he is happy to see it continue to make a contribution to congregational music making.⁹⁴ In their *Celtic Modern* Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman point out that in the midst of multiple “circuits” of exchange and interaction, there is “no singular or unitary musical vision of the Celtic world, but rather a bewildering diversity.”⁹⁵ In light of this, the ambiguities and contradictions surrounding “Celtic”-sounding elements as a code for “Scottishness” in MacMillan’s congregational

⁸⁹ In fact, Gelbart also says the same about “art music,” his argument being that “folk” and “art” have gained their meanings in their oppositional relationship to one another. See Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”: Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

⁹⁰ The devolution of political power from Westminster (London) to Holyrood (Edinburgh) in the setting up of the Scottish Executive (now the Scottish Government) in 1997 and the Scottish independence referendum of 2016 have raised anew questions over the meaning of “Scottishness” in the twenty-first century.

⁹¹ Simon McKerrell, *Focus: Scottish Traditional Music* (London: Routledge, 2016), 7.

⁹² See James MacMillan, “How Trendy ‘Liturgists’ Tried to Stop My Mass Being Performed for the Pope,” Telegraph blog, October 27, 2010; <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/jmacmillan/100048309/how-trendy-liturgists-tried-to-stop-my-mass-being-performed-for-the-pope/>. See also the section “Tensions Surrounding the First Performance of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*” below.

⁹³ Certainly MacMillan’s approach raises serious questions about the notion of “authenticity,” for example in his use of *poibaireachd*-style ornamentation, which, while consciously drawing upon the category of bagpipe music known as *poibaireachd*, in practical terms bears very little relation to actual *poibaireachd* (not least in instrumentation, form, and context).

⁹⁴ Of course, one must question the role the publisher may have played in ensuring the viability of what by all accounts is a popular (and potentially profitable) Mass setting—in Scotland, at least.

⁹⁵ Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, eds., *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 17.

music—and in Scottish Catholic liturgical music more widely—perhaps reflect some of the wider uncertainties about musical and cultural identity within Scotland itself, and what counts as “Scottish” music more generally.

Harmony and Organ Accompaniment

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman has a degree of harmonic complexity beyond that of either *St Anne’s Mass* or *The Galloway Mass*. As Example 1 above shows, the harmonic language of *St Anne’s Mass* is characterized by simple and relatively predictable chord progressions, a regular harmonic rhythm, and a notated organ part that is easily reducible to basic root-position and first-inversion triads (albeit with some added sevenths). Likewise, the harmonic language of *The Galloway Mass* is fairly simple, repetitive, and predictable, though its use of pedal points at various moments lends some additional harmonic interest. In contrast, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* has numerous passing and full modulations, is arguably less repetitive and predictable in terms of its chord progressions, and has a more varied, and sometimes rapid, harmonic rhythm. This is especially true of the Gloria movement, where the lack of harmonic predictability also gives rise to a degree of melodic unpredictability for the congregation. Example 7 shows how the music of the Gloria modulates from F-sharp minor to D minor, requiring the congregation to sing naturalized pitches that were sharp only a few measures earlier.

We have already seen that MacMillan has said that any congregation should be able to sing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*,

provided they have a “competent organist.”⁹⁶ Indeed, the organ accompaniment is more difficult to play than that of *St Anne’s Mass* or *The Galloway Mass*. Unlike the largely homophonic accompaniment of the earlier works, the organ accompaniment of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* generally has more independent voices, and is not as easily reducible to basic triadic chord progressions without losing some of the essential meaning of the music. Therefore, it requires a higher standard of music literacy and technical proficiency from an organist, is less amenable to “approximation” by lower-skilled organists, and is also more difficult to adapt for those wishing to accompany on an alternative instrument, such as the guitar.⁹⁷ All of these factors potentially limit the viability of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* in parishes without a skilled organist—or indeed, without a pipe organ.

The Reception and Legacy of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* as a Congregational Setting

We have seen that *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* is arguably more difficult for congregations and musicians to play and sing than MacMillan’s earlier congregational settings. But in order to fully assess the suitability of the setting for Scottish Catholic congregations, it is also important to consider the real-world reception and legacy of the work.

⁹⁶ Guardian Music, “James MacMillan on Faith and Music.”

⁹⁷ By “approximation,” I mean for example “vamping” on the basic chord changes. Accompanying the setting with an alternative instrument such as the guitar may be useful in parishes that do not have an organ or organist, for example.

Example 7: Modulation in the Gloria of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*

measure 24

The image displays a musical score for three parts: CANTOR & CONGREGATION, CHOIR (Optional), and ORGAN. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first system, labeled 'measure 24', features a *ff* (fortissimo) dynamic. The vocal parts sing 'Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the'. The organ part provides accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The second system continues the text 'Fa-ther, you take a-way the sins of the world, have...' with a *p* (piano) dynamic. The organ part continues with a more active melodic line in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand.

Indeed, there are two sources of information that are useful to us: face-to-face interviews carried out by the author in 2013 with music leaders working in different Roman Catholic parishes in Scotland, and public commentary about the first liturgical performance of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* by James MacMillan

and others, which was published in the immediate aftermath of Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United Kingdom.

Interviews with Scottish Catholic Music Leaders

Twenty-one Scottish Catholic music leaders were interviewed by the author between late May and early December 2013 as part of a larger study of music making in the contemporary Roman Catholic Church in Scotland.⁹⁸ James MacMillan and Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, chairman of the National Music Advisory Board and co-music director of the 2010 Glasgow papal Mass, were also interviewed by the author as part of the research.⁹⁹ The purpose of these face-to-face, semistructured interviews was to gather details of the experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of some of the people leading liturgical music making in Scottish Catholic parishes at the time. Music leaders were defined as those who create, shape, and realize music in the Roman Catholic liturgy; in other words, people who have roles and responsibilities extending beyond those of an average congregation member, and the participants included priests, composers, and musicians. Interviewees were selected so as to

include a range of perspectives, experiences, and approaches to liturgical music making. Factors guiding this selection included a desire to interview participants who occupy different roles, and who lead liturgical music making in different contexts and locations in Scotland; the inclusion of both volunteer and paid musicians; and representation of both males and females. Table 2 summarizes the various roles of the music leaders interviewed for the study.

Table 2: Interview Participants' Roles

3 Organist
1 Organist/choir director
1 Organist/composer
1 Music director
1 Music director/composer
1 Choir director/cantor
2 Paid singer (choral scholar)
4 Volunteer singer
1 Lyricist
2 Composer
2 Priest/composer
2 Priest

⁹⁸ See Michael Ferguson, "Understanding the Tensions in Liturgical Music-Making in the Roman Catholic Church in Contemporary Scotland" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2015).

⁹⁹ The National Music Advisory Board (NMAB) is chaired by Monsignor Fitzpatrick and forms part of the Liturgy Commission of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland. As a constituent of the Liturgy Commission (which has both advisory and executive functions), the NMAB has official responsibility for liturgical music at a national level in Scotland: advising the Scottish Catholic bishops on music, potentially taking decisions and actions on behalf of the Bishops' Conference, and more generally promoting the "development" of liturgical music in the Catholic Church in Scotland. The NMAB committee meets twice per year and is made up of representatives—music makers, as well as people involved in other areas linked to liturgical music—from all eight of the Scottish Catholic dioceses. See Bishops' Conference of Scotland, *The Catholic Directory for Scotland 2013* (Glasgow: Burns Publications, 2013), 79.

Interviews took place at a venue of the music leader's choosing, though the majority occurred either at the participants' homes or at the churches where they make liturgical music.¹⁰⁰ Conversations were recorded and

¹⁰⁰ Four of the interviews took place in cafes or restaurants, while one took place in a participant's workplace office.

subsequently transcribed and anonymized, as agreed with the participants.¹⁰¹

Before the interviews took place, a topic guide was developed to provide the basis of the face-to-face discussion and subsequent interview analysis. This centered upon the following core questions:

- i) How does the participant experience liturgical music making?
- ii) How does the participant evaluate their own liturgical music making, and that of others?
- iii) Is the participant aware of tensions, or involved in a national debate about Catholic liturgical music in Scotland?

These main questions inspired various subquestions, which included content mapping and content mining questions.¹⁰² During the face-to-face interviews, these were useful as a means of guiding or reorienting the discussion toward the core topic areas, where the interviewer was often then able to depart from the pre-prepared topic guide to respond to the uniquely unfolding interview account.

It is important to note that interviewees were not directly asked about *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* during their interviews, at least in the first instance. Nevertheless, many

spontaneously mentioned MacMillan's setting in their account, and it emerged from the discussions that nearly all of the participants had some direct experience of singing, playing, or preparing the work. This was due mainly to the fact that *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* was disseminated widely among Scottish Catholic parishes in the run-up to the 2010 Scottish papal Mass, and at least some of the music leaders were tasked with teaching it to their home congregations, or to parishioners who would form part of the 600-strong massed choir for the open-air service.

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman as a Congregational Setting for the Glasgow Papal Mass

Pope Benedict XVI's arrival in Edinburgh in September 2010 was the first visit of the head of the Roman Catholic Church to Scotland since the pastoral visit of Pope John Paul II in the summer of 1982. On the afternoon of Thursday, September 16, an estimated 70,000 Roman Catholics, including parishioners from all eight Scottish Catholic dioceses, gathered for Mass at Bellahouston Park, Glasgow.¹⁰³ Under the direction of co-music directors Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick and Father Michael Hudson, the combined choir from parishes across Scotland performed over 25 pieces of music.¹⁰⁴ Alongside MacMillan's specially commissioned *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, other service music was chosen by the music directors in conjunction

¹⁰¹ The exceptions are James MacMillan and Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, whose interviews were not anonymized due to the fact they were national-level public figures whose views and comments about liturgical music were already in the public domain. At his request, interview transcript extracts were sent to MacMillan to check, and he made some minor grammatical corrections. The interview methodology was reviewed and approved by a research ethics panel at the University of Edinburgh Reid School of Music.

¹⁰² Robin Legard et al., "In-depth Interviews," in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, ed. Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 148–52.

¹⁰³ "Papal Visit: Thousands Attend Mass in Glasgow," *BBC News*, September 16, 2010; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11333448>.

¹⁰⁴ *Choir Workbook for The Bellahouston Mass with Pope Benedict XVI, September 16th 2010* (produced by the music organizing committee, under the leadership of Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick and Father Michael Hudson). The author was a member of the combined choir for the Bellahouston Park Mass.

with the Bishops' Conference of Scotland's National Music Advisory Board, with the aim of achieving "as much participation by the congregation as possible while giving a distinctly Scottish/Celtic flavour to the liturgy and making full use of the musical resources available."¹⁰⁵

Tensions Surrounding the First Performance of Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman

As Pope Benedict XVI's London-bound aircraft lifted off the runway at Glasgow airport on the evening of September 16, many in the U.K. media were already dubbing the Scottish leg of his visit a success.¹⁰⁶ In the weeks and months that followed, however, it emerged that not everything had run smoothly behind the scenes. Six weeks after the pope's visit, James MacMillan wrote publically that "an almighty row" had erupted around his *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*.¹⁰⁷ Writing in his online *Telegraph* blog, he complained that during the preparations for the pope's visit, there had been attempts to have his setting dropped entirely from the Glasgow papal Mass:

Unknown to me the new setting was taken to a "committee" which has controlled the development of liturgical music in Scotland for some time. Their agenda is to pursue the 1970s Americanised solution to the post-Conciliar vernacular liturgy, to the exclusion of more "traditional" possibilities. They have

¹⁰⁵ See "Papal Visit 2010—Bellahouston," *St Mungo Music*, November 6, 2010; <http://stmungomusic.org.uk/papal-visit-2010-bellahouston/>. Note that the Music Committee of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, which is also chaired by Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick, operates under the name "St Mungo Music."

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, "Papal Visit: Thousands Attend Mass in Glasgow."

¹⁰⁷ See MacMillan, "How 'Trendy' Liturgists' Tried to Stop My Mass Being Performed for the Pope."

been known for their hostility to Gregorian chant, for example, but have reluctantly had to get in line since the arrival of Benedict XVI [to the papacy]. They also have a commitment to the kind of cod-Celticness that owes more to the soundtracks of *Lord of the Rings* and *Braveheart*, than anything remotely authentic. There has also been a suspicion of professionals with this committee, and many serious musicians in the [Roman Catholic] Church in Scotland have felt excluded from their decisions and processes, or have chosen not to become involved in territory which is felt to be hostile.¹⁰⁸

According to MacMillan, those overseeing the music had branded his new Mass setting "not pastoral enough," "unsingable," and "not fit for purpose."¹⁰⁹ He suggested that, as the disagreements unfolded, the Scottish bishops were divided as to how to proceed: four members of the Scottish Catholic hierarchy eventually pledged their support for him, while another sided with the organizing committee.¹¹⁰ The performance of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* only went ahead, MacMillan argued, in part due to anxiety over the potential "media car crash" that would result from it being dropped in Scotland, while being sung as planned at the open-air papal Mass in Birmingham, England, on September 19.¹¹¹

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman as Too Difficult for the Scottish Papal Congregation to Sing

Following MacMillan's comments, Monsignor Fitzpatrick responded publically by defending

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. In his article, MacMillan refrains from specifically naming the National Music Advisory Board or its chairman, Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. MacMillan talks in his article of how one of the bishops sent him an "upsetting letter."

¹¹¹ Ibid.

the committee's reservations, arguing that *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* was "beautiful," but that "the score had been delivered too late for congregations to rehearse adequately."¹¹² Under such circumstances, he urged, the organizing committee was worried that "people would find it hard to pray through the music while being concerned about getting it right."¹¹³ Reflecting on the 2010 papal visit three years later, Fitzpatrick reaffirmed his assessment and pinpointed a lack of congregational accessibility in the setting:

We spent so much time on the Mass [setting]—we shaved other things, you know, because we didn't have time to . . . argh, nightmare! Because we have to respect where people are at. Especially if they're preparing for a one-off event—it's got to be accessible!¹¹⁴

Many of the music leaders interviewed who attended the papal Mass also felt that MacMillan's setting had been too difficult for the crowd to sing on the day. As one female parish music leader put it, "I don't think it fits where most people are. . . . It's beautiful, but no one near me was singing it."¹¹⁵

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman as Failing to Resonate with the "Identity" of the Scottish Catholic Community

It is clear that for Monsignor Fitzpatrick, the Second Vatican Council's call for "active

participation" is paramount, and his own liturgical music making is guided by what he calls the "pastoral principle."¹¹⁶ This involves tailoring liturgical music making to the needs of the worshipping community, and aligning it not only to a congregation's practical singing abilities, but also to its wider make-up, circumstances, and identity. For Fitzpatrick, artistic elitism in newly composed liturgical music has the potential to render it out of touch with a worshipping community:

And liturgy, when you introduce new music, there has to be something in it that you can identify with. [. . .] Just as the Church is not for the chosen few, it's for "The Great Unwashed" — us! [laughs] *We* are the people! I think composers for the Church have to realise that if they want to empower people, then they've got to give it partly on people's terms. And we were bogged down, I think, already with the art music of the bishops and princes, and so forth. And that's the stuff we love as our heritage . . . but it's only part of our heritage. It should be put in its social context, and its economic context as well.¹¹⁷

Communal music making can be both expressive and formative of group identity, and while music making can reflect a community's ideal vision of itself, it can also enable that same community to *become* this

¹¹² Rebecca Tavener, "Unholy Row," *Choir and Organ* 19/1 (2011): 4.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Monsignor Gerry Fitzpatrick interview with the author in Glasgow on November 4, 2013.

¹¹⁵ Only a small minority of interviewees disagreed with this view, with one organist, for example, characterizing such assessments as a "patronising" underestimation of the musical abilities of Scottish Catholic congregations.

¹¹⁶ A term that he used on multiple occasions during the course of his face-to-face interview with the author. It is important to note that Monsignor Fitzpatrick is also a composer of liturgical music, and also had a number of his own items performed in the Glasgow papal liturgy (including the Responsorial Psalm).

¹¹⁷ Fitzpatrick, interview with the author.

ideal vision, in embodied, lived form.¹¹⁸ As music sociologist Simon Frith puts it, “music gives us real experience of what the ideal could be.”¹¹⁹ Therefore, there is much at stake when a congregation comes together to sing at a national-level liturgical event like the Glasgow papal Mass. For at least some of the music leaders interviewed, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* failed to resonate adequately with what they perceived to be the identity of the assembled Scottish Catholic community. In particular, some participants felt that the “refined” nature of MacMillan’s setting rendered it out of touch with a Scottish Catholic population that they perceived to be primarily “working-class”:

There is no way . . . the choir can manage it [*Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*], of course they can—a good choir. Therefore that’s not going to help things, I don’t think. At that level it becomes, liturgy and music becomes quite a refined thing, a middle-class thing. Well most Catholics are not in that category, they’re not. [Parish priest]

Both Monsignor Fitzpatrick and the parish priest quoted above directly connect the issue of artistic elitism with the perceived social class of Scottish Catholics. In fact, scholars have long grappled with issues around the division of the cultural world into high-culture and low-culture, and how the consumption of this culture can potentially

map to social class and status.¹²⁰ The characterization of the Scottish Catholic community as working-class is interesting, because on the face of it the most recent data actually shows that Scotland’s Roman Catholic population is more heterogeneous in

¹²⁰ See T. W. Chan and J. H. Goldthorpe, “Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption: Music in England,” *European Sociological Review* 23/1 (2007): 1–19. Chan and Goldthorpe outline three major theories that have emerged in the twentieth century about the relationship between cultural consumption and social stratification. Pierre Bourdieu, for example, posits the *homological* relationship between social class and status, where the “habitus”—a “lens” through which the social and cultural world is perceived—is the mediator in this relationship (see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984]). In this way, dominant classes underwrite their status by aligning themselves to “legitimate” forms of culture. The *individualization* theory, on the other hand, posits that in the modern world, cultural consumption and lifestyle choices are gradually losing their clearly defined link with social stratification, with individuals moving “from habitus to freedom.” However, Chan and Goldthorpe conclude that the most convincing argument is the *omnivore* theory, whereby the cultural consumption of higher-status individuals is greater and much wider than that of low-status individuals—comprising more “high-brow” culture, but also more “middle-” and “low-brow” culture. In fact, Chan and Goldthorpe struggled to find evidence of high-status groups who rejected “low-brow” culture in favor of exclusively “high-brow” culture. For an interesting theological perspective, see also Ken Myers, *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1989). Drawing upon the work of C. S. Lewis, Myers marks a clear distinction between high forms of art, which are “received,” and lower forms of art, which are essentially functional and are therefore “used” (p. 94), echoing to some extent the differentiation between aesthetic concerns and function that we have encountered in the postconciliar Catholic music debate outlined above. In this respect, Myers is perhaps too quick to write off the functional potential and value of high art; for some of the other scholars we have encountered, high art is always functional (see Wolterstorff, “Thinking about Church Music”), and high aesthetic quality (or “beauty”) can be legitimately functional (see Gillen, “Towards a Definition of ‘Good’ Liturgical Music”). See also William Edgar, *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991): 377–80, for an insightful review of Myers’s book.

¹¹⁸ See, for example, Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); D. J. Hargreaves and A. C. North, “The Functions of Music in Everyday Life: Redefining the Social in Music Psychology,” *Psychology of Music* 27/1 (1999); Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Mark Rimmer, “Beyond Omnivores and Univores: The Promise of a Concept of Musical Habitus,” *Cultural Sociology* 6/3 (2012).

¹¹⁹ Frith, *Performing Rites*, 274.

terms of social class and occupation than at any time in its history.¹²¹ Nevertheless, there is also strong evidence to suggest that the modern Scottish Catholic population does, in fact, bear echoes of a working-class immigrant history that continues to shape its identity in the present.

The Scottish Catholic Population as Descendants of Irish Working-Class Migrants

Roman Catholics are a minority group in present-day Scotland: a year after the 2010 papal visit, 841,053 of Scotland's 5.3 million inhabitants identified as Catholic, representing around 16 percent of the population.¹²² This group is made up of a majority of Scottish-born Catholics, alongside migrants from Europe and beyond, not least Poland.¹²³ However, the roots of the vast majority of Scottish-born Roman Catholics lie in the waves of Irish economic migrants who made their way to Scottish shores in the wake of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution, and continued to do so well into the first half of

the twentieth century.¹²⁴ The second half of the twentieth century saw marked changes in the economic, social, and political landscape of Scotland, due not least to deindustrialization and political devolution. The Roman Catholic population has benefited greatly from the increase in social mobility that these changes have brought. In fact, by the end of the twentieth century, Catholics were integrated to such an extent within Scottish society that contemporary scholars were debating whether it was any longer possible to talk of a distinct Scottish Catholic community.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, others have argued that a distinctive Catholic community does still exist in twenty-first-century Scotland.¹²⁶ While Scottish Catholics may have moved “out of the ghetto,” echoes of their shared working-class origins continue to

¹²¹ See “Analysis of Equality Results from 2011 Census, Part 2, Chapter 3: Religion,” October 14, 2014; <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/10/8378>.

¹²² The total population of Scotland at the time of the 2011 census was 5,295,403.

¹²³ Poles began arriving in Scotland in increased numbers after the 2004 expansion of the European Union, when Poland became a member state. The 2011 census data shows 61,201 people identifying as “White: Polish,” with 77 percent of these also identifying as Roman Catholic.

¹²⁴ Prior to their arrival, Roman Catholicism existed only in scattered pockets in Scotland, mainly in the rural West Highlands, being effectively outlawed in the 1560 Scottish Reformation. The worst of this anti-Catholicism gradually softened in eighteenth-century Enlightenment Scotland, and the economic landscape of the country began to alter radically during the first half of the nineteenth century. Desperate to escape dire economic hardship at home—and not least the devastating potato famine of 1845–52—Irish (mainly) Catholic migrants began leaving their homeland in search of permanent work in new Scottish industry; see Steve Bruce et al., *Sectarianism in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 10. These Irish workers and their families often settled in clustered groups close to the centers of employment, and frequently maintained cultural and social lives that were distinct from the mainly Presbyterian majority Scottish population. As numbers grew, relatively distinct neighborhoods emerged, with the Irish community sometimes engaging in what Prof. Tom Gallagher has described as “voluntary segregation”; see Tom Gallagher, *Divided Scotland: Ethnic Friction and Christian Crisis* (Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2013), 26.

¹²⁵ See, for example, Raymond Boyle and Peter Lynch, eds., *Out of the Ghetto: The Catholic Community in Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998), which was the result of a conference held at Stirling University in January 1997.

¹²⁶ See *ibid.*, 3

shape the location, housing, jobs, and socio-economic status of members of the community in the present day.¹²⁷

In their study of the Scottish Catholic community at the end of the twentieth century, Raymond Boyle and Peter Lynch pointed out that “while the Catholic Church may be universal, the role, position, importance and profile of the Catholic Church in Scotland differ significantly from its English counterpart.”¹²⁸ In other words, due to its unique location, circumstances, and socio-economic history, the Scottish Catholic community is in many ways distinct from the Roman Catholic population in England. In composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, therefore, James MacMillan had the unenviable task of creating a single Mass setting that would speak both to and for each

of these Roman Catholic communities. As we have already seen, *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* failed to meet the expectations of those in charge of shaping the papal liturgy for the Scottish Catholic community due to its lack of “accessibility” for the Scottish Catholic community—both on a technical level and in terms of the community’s perceived identity. In this respect, it is also worth noting that the title of the work bears a much closer relation to the English papal liturgy, which centered upon the beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman, a prominent religious figure with particular associations for English Catholics. Meanwhile, the focus of the Glasgow papal Mass was in fact St. Ninian of Galloway, one of the first known Christian missionaries in Scotland, and a saint with particular resonance for the Scottish Catholic community.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ According to the most recent census data, Catholics in Scotland are still a predominantly urban population, which is predominantly clustered around the former industrialized centers—particularly the West Central council areas—that saw the vast influx of Irish workers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Likewise, of all the single groups identified in the most recent (2011) census of Scotland, Catholics are the religious group most likely to work in “elementary occupations” (described in the summary results as “farm workers, construction labourers, packers and the like”; see Office for National Statistics, *Standard Occupational Classification 2010*, vol. 1, 237–54, for a more detailed breakdown), are least likely to be in the top three occupational groups, and are more likely than the average population to be in the lowest socio-economic classification groups. Although the majority of Catholics in Scotland own their own home, they are the most likely of all religious groups to live in rented social housing, to live in a flat or temporary structure, and are least likely to live in a detached house. Overcrowding in Catholic households is slightly higher than for the Scottish population at large, and Roman Catholics are overrepresented in Scottish prisons. See “Analysis of Equality Results from 2011 Census, Part 2, Chapter 3: Religion.” See also “Statistical Bulletin: Prison Statistics and Population Projections Scotland: 2011–12,” June 29, 2012; <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0039/00396363.pdf>.

¹²⁸ Boyle and Lynch, *Out of the Ghetto*, 3.

The Suitability of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* for Regular Parish Music Making

Many of the music leaders interviewed were aware that James MacMillan intended his *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* to form part of the regularly sung congregational repertoire in Scottish parishes after the papal visit. The vast majority, however, claimed not to use the setting in their own parish music making. Some characterized the work as suitable only for a “special occasion,” while others told of how their own parishes lacked the skills or resources to perform the setting:

I don't know anybody that's used it again.
And I remember being told at the time when

¹²⁹ Pope Benedict XVI's arrival in Scotland coincided with St. Ninian's annual feast day, and his first port of call on arrival was a St. Ninian's Day parade through the streets of Edinburgh city center, watched by an estimated 125,000 onlookers. One might imagine that a Mass setting for the Glasgow papal service could appropriately have been called *Mass of St. Ninian*, though of course this was not the case.

it was all over [the Scottish papal Mass] that we had to rip up the copies, for copyright reasons, and I was like, “well to be honest with you, with pleasure.” Because although it’s lovely, I couldn’t . . . and I still can’t ever envisage using it, because it’s complicated musically for the choir and for the congregation. As I say, getting back to saying what’s in the rulebook, there is room for everything. And everything that it says in it always . . . virtually everything has the disclaimer: “wherever possible.” [Choir director]

In fact, many of those interviewed directly compared *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* to MacMillan’s earlier *St Anne’s Mass*. Those who perceived *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* to be too complex to perform in their own parish generally characterized *St Anne’s Mass* as much more “accessible” and “congregationally friendly.”¹³⁰ Some of the participants felt that in composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, MacMillan had consciously abandoned his earlier, more amenable congregational style—a perception that tallies with the composer’s own account of having changed his approach to writing congregational music in the early 2000s. As one priest put it, “people love that [*St Anne’s Mass*], it’s a nice tune, and Jimmy lost sight of that at some point.”

Music-Making Practices in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland

Finally, in understanding the culture around Scottish Catholic music, it is important to acknowledge that this culture can both shape, and be shaped by, the day-to-day practice of music making. In order to gain some insight into this, the results of a large-scale national postal survey, undertaken by the author in late

¹³⁰ Though none of them went into specific technical details of why this was the case.

2013, can allow us to build a picture of Catholic liturgical music making at a national level in Scotland.¹³¹

Questionnaires were sent to every Roman Catholic parish in Scotland (at the time $n = 447$),¹³² and respondents included parish priests, music leaders, and parish musicians.¹³³ The survey gathered mostly quantitative data about the nature, scale, and structure of liturgical music making in the Scottish Catholic Church. Participants were asked to provide data about what music is played and sung in their parish, when it occurs, and who chooses, creates, and realizes it. Other questions were designed to gather qualitative data about respondents’ own evaluations of liturgical music, the perceived distinctiveness of their parish’s music making, and its aspirations for the future. In total, 508 questionnaires were sent out to parishes in late October and early November 2013.¹³⁴ In all, 248 usable responses were received,

¹³¹ Questionnaires were sent out in October and November 2013.

¹³² The questionnaire was sent to parish priests by name, with instructions that they should complete it themselves, or pass it to someone who knew the music making well in their parish. Questionnaires were not sent directly to music makers because no comprehensive source of contact information existed for these people, unlike parish priests, who were listed in the *Catholic Directory for Scotland 2013*.

¹³³ In all, 67.5 percent of questionnaires were returned by priests. Other respondents included organists (10.7 percent), music leaders (7.8 percent), parish musicians (2.1 percent), and other roles (11.9 percent). The gender of respondents was 78.7 percent male, 20.5 percent female, and 0.8 percent “both” (multiple respondents recorded on questionnaires).

¹³⁴ The reason that 508 questionnaires were distributed among 447 parishes is that a minority of parishes in Scotland are made up of multiple churches, usually under the leadership of a single priest (13 percent of parishes for which data is available). Each questionnaire was designed to record detailed data in a single church location, and so multichurch parishes received a questionnaire for each church.

yielding a usable questionnaire response rate of 48.8 percent.¹³⁵

The survey results indicate that the national “landscape” of music making in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland is characterized, principally, by a heterogeneity of approaches and repertoire. In other words, there appears to be a high degree of local adaptation and parish-specific variation in music making.¹³⁶ It is worth questioning to what extent James MacMillan was aware of this diversity when composing *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, and to what extent his work was trying to speak to this.¹³⁷ Despite the existence of a National Music Advisory Board, which officially holds responsibility for

¹³⁵ Usable response rates in the Roman Catholic dioceses in Scotland ranged from 39.1 percent in the Diocese of Galloway to 76.6 percent in the Diocese of Paisley.

¹³⁶ For example, the singing of hymns is the most common form of music making in parishes (the majority of parishes also sing some of the Mass Ordinary), but the data suggests that “traditional hymns” (95.9 percent) and “contemporary/folk hymns” (78.5 percent) often occur side by side. Likewise, other types of music heard in parishes include plainchant (31.5 percent), choral music composed after Vatican II (17.8 percent), choral music composed before Vatican II (14.6 percent), solo singing (classical style) (12.8 percent), and solo singing (contemporary/folk style) (15.1 percent). Only a tiny minority of parishes sing choral polyphony (2.3 percent). Also, 38 percent of parishes have a choir of some kind, while 11.9 percent use prerecorded music. English is the most commonly sung language, but just under a third of parishes (33 percent) also sing the more traditional Latin, with smaller minorities singing Polish (5 percent) and Gaelic (3.7 percent).

¹³⁷ Given the lack of meaningful national-level coordination of music making (see below), it is unlikely that MacMillan had a full picture of the liturgical-musical landscape in Scotland. And indeed, one might question whether, on one hand, he may have attempted to speak to this diversity more explicitly had he known of it, or rather—and one might argue more likely—he would position *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* as setting a new standard and precedent for parish congregational music in the midst of a plethora of approaches and repertoire.

promoting the development of Catholic liturgical music in Scotland, the evidence suggests there is actually little obvious national-level coordination or standardization. The survey results also show that Scottish Catholic music making is an overwhelmingly volunteer activity: paid musicians were active in only 12.3 percent of recorded parishes, while volunteer musicians featured in 90 percent of parishes.¹³⁸ The data tells us less about the different skill sets and training levels of these volunteer musicians, but insights gathered in the face-to-face interviews suggest that there is currently no standard mechanism for training Catholic parish musicians in Scotland, and that skill levels of volunteer musicians can vary dramatically from parish to parish. An interesting phenomenon emerging from the survey data is that it is not uncommon for congregations to sing unaccompanied, particularly at weekday Masses.¹³⁹ *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, with its “sing-through” Gloria movement, its relative rhythmic complexity, its high amount of melodic variation, and its various harmonic modulations, is arguably much less viable as an unaccompanied setting than MacMillan’s previous, rather simpler congregational Masses.

¹³⁸ It is important to note that some parishes had both paid and unpaid musicians, hence the 12.3/90 percent split. Postal survey data was missing for three parishes. Results correspond to the total valid parish responses ($n = 220$). The Diocese of Motherwell has the highest percentage of parishes with a paid musician (27.8 percent), followed by Aberdeen (19 percent) and Paisley (13.6 percent). There were no paid musicians recorded in the Diocese of Argyll.

¹³⁹ The results suggest that in 82 percent of weekday Masses where the congregation sing, they do so unaccompanied, while the percentage is lower for Saturday and Sunday Masses, at 29 and 15 percent, respectively.

In his 2016 article, Stephen Kingsbury suggests that James MacMillan “blames the lack of widespread popularity of his liturgical works on the perception by Scottish congregations that these pieces are elitist.”¹⁴⁰ Focusing exclusively on *St Anne’s Mass* and *The Galloway Mass*, he points out that “this claim of elitism is ironic, given that MacMillan’s congregational Masses are composed in such an accessible style.”¹⁴¹ But in his seeming unawareness of *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, Kingsbury largely misses the point that it is this, MacMillan’s third and most recent congregational setting, that some in the Scottish Catholic Church have perceived as elitist.

MacMillan evidently hoped that *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman* would make a long-term impact on the future direction of parish music making in Scotland. However, its “failure” to achieve this—defined and recognized by MacMillan himself—can be attributed, at least in part, to its incompatibility with the dominant liturgical culture in the Catholic Church in Scotland. Ideologically, this culture is underpinned by a drive for “accessibility” in all areas of music making, a preference for local (especially “Celtic”) styles, and the prioritization of congregational singing over the potentially competing concerns of aesthetic quality and artistic excellence—taking its lead, on one hand, from the wider debate about liturgical music after the Second Vatican Council, but on the other, presenting a familiar liturgical-musical worldview in a characteristically Scottish way. On a practical level, the liturgical culture in Scotland is shaped by a relative heterogeneity of practical approaches to music making, an absence of meaningful national-

level coordination of repertoire and practice, and potentially wide variation in skill sets of liturgical music makers across Scottish parishes.

In the midst of this culture, it is not difficult to see how the Benedict XVI–inspired theories of “authentic” liturgical music that are centered on objective notions of “holiness,” “beauty,” and “universality,” and which have informed *Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman*, might be perceived by some Scottish Catholic music makers as a threat to their local traditions and priorities. And indeed, one might well question whether “universality” in liturgical music can truly be represented by the (rather narrow) styles that stem from the distinctly central European tradition of the “sacred treasure” of historical repertoire. However, in the midst of an evidently diverse Scottish liturgical-musical landscape, and the relatively heterogeneous nature of the contemporary Scottish Catholic population, one might equally question whether those who have sought to define “the people’s terms” in the face of MacMillan’s perceived “elitism” are actually imposing their own, equally narrow view of what constitutes Scottish Catholic musical identity.

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman appeared at a time of heightened tensions around Catholic music in Scotland, which were underpinned to some extent by the papacy of the relatively conservative Pope Benedict XVI. In the era of Pope Francis—who is often heralded as a more liberal pontiff—these tensions seem to have softened. Nevertheless, we have seen that the issue of “Scottishness” in music, and Scottish cultural identity more generally, is far from clear-cut. Given the ambiguities around the Scottish Catholic musical “voice,” it is perhaps ironic that MacMillan’s attempts to reshape this with

¹⁴⁰ Kingsbury, “Aesthetic Meaning,” 99.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Mass of Blessed John Henry Newman were undermined—at least in part—by the precedents that he himself had set with his earlier “Celtic”-dominated congregational Mass settings.