

The Theological Integration of Contemporary Praise and Worship Music in Philippine Liturgical Celebrations: An Examination of "Still" and "Goodness of God" and their Use in Catholic Liturgical Celebrations.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the theological integration of Contemporary Praise and Worship music within Philippine liturgical celebrations, with a particular focus on the songs "Still" by Hillsong Worship and "Goodness of God" by Bethel Music. By examining these songs' theological content, lyrical quality, and alignment with the Catholic Church's criteria for liturgical music, the study highlights how contemporary worship music can enhance communal worship and foster a deeper connection with God. The paper also addresses the challenges of incorporating contemporary music into traditional liturgy, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the integrity and sanctity of the worship service. Through a historical and contextual analysis, this research provides valuable insights for church leaders, musicians, and the faithful in integrating diverse musical genres into Catholic worship.

Keywords: Liturgical music, Contemporary Music, Liturgical Celebrations, Sacred Music, Worship Songs, Liturgical song criteria, Non-Catholic Songs, Secular Music

INTRODUCTION

Liturgy represents the collective worship of the believing community in a public setting. Within this significant act of praising and glorifying God, music stands out as a tangible and expressive means of articulating our beliefs. Music functions as a communicative medium that takes the distinct qualities of each individual and puts them together into a unified community. Communal singing emerges as a collective expression, shaped by the incorporation of numerous voices expressing shared faith and love. Consequently, communal singing becomes a collective prayer and praise, underscoring the corporate nature of this act [1].

For centuries, traditional services have been the established norm among the ingroup. However, societal shifts have prompted many churches to introduce contemporary services to engage with today's culture. On the surface, the conflict's focal point revolves around the music issue. Numerous theologians and lay individuals deem this a critical matter, though their assessments vary. Some prioritize the significance of lyrics, preferring substance over form, while others emphasize the musical elements, favoring style over structure. There is also a divergence of opinion on whether music should lean towards the cognitive or the emotive [2].

Interestingly, these issues are not exclusive to the current generation. In Joseph Herl's Book, "Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism" (2004), he explores the pertinent issues of the sixteenth century, where debates over music in worship similarly took center stage. The use of non-Catholic songs in Catholic liturgical services can be a source of dispute and raises several issues within the Catholic community. An example is in some Catholic schools in Bukidnon; some campus ministers do not allow the use of contemporary music composed by non-Catholic singers in the liturgy. They do not include music like "Who Am I" by Casting Crowns or "Still" in the

mass as they find this not fit due to its composer. However, they use the song "Power of Your Love" during communion. The question arose: when can a song composed by a non-Catholic group be allowed to be used in the Catholic Liturgical Celebrations?

The main objective of this study is to theologically examine the use of Contemporary Praise and Worship music in Philippine liturgical celebrations, with a particular focus on identifying Catholic and non-Catholic music and exploring their theoretical role. Furthermore, the study aims to analyze how Catholics can use songs from other religious denominations, such as "Still" by Hillsong and "Goodness of God," in the liturgical services.

CONTEXTUAL DISCUSSION ON MUSIC

A. Sacred Music

Sacred music proves highly effective in nurturing the devotion of believers during celebrations of the Word of God and in popular devotions. When engaging in the Liturgy of the Word within the Mass, it is advisable to use it as a model. Popular devotions, including psalms, sacred musical pieces from ancient and contemporary traditions, religious folk songs, and instruments like the organ or others specific to a particular culture can enhance the spiritual experience [3].

The genuine purpose of sacred music is "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful." In this context, sacred music refers to compositions explicitly created to celebrate divine worship, characterized by a certain holy sincerity of form. Under the umbrella of sacred music are Gregorian chant, various forms of sacred polyphony, both ancient and modern, holy compositions for the organ and other approved instruments, and sacred popular music, whether liturgical or religious [4].

When choosing the type of sacred music to use, whether intended for the choir or the congregation, the abilities of those performing must be considered. The Church does not prohibit any particular kind of sacred music from liturgical actions as long as it aligns with the spirit of the liturgical celebration and the nature of its components. Additionally, it should allow people to participate actively [5].

Furthermore, in these popular devotions, particularly during celebrations of the Word of God, it is commendable to incorporate musical works that, while no longer part of the Liturgy, still can cultivate a religious atmosphere and facilitate contemplation of the sacred mystery [6].

The historical dimension of church service music in Filipino communities reflects a fabric woven with threads of colonialism, cultural assimilation, and religious evolution. Understanding the historical context is essential to explaining the theological nuances of these songs and their profound influence on the Filipino Christian faith. Spanish missionaries' colonization of the Philippines in the 16th century profoundly affected the development of Christian worship practices, including church music. The introduction of European music and music forced Western genres to incorporate Filipino religion; the mark of the first part of their existence laid the foundation for a unique blend of Catholicism and indigenous Filipino spirituality, manifested in the syncretism evident in contemporary liturgical music [7].

Moreover, historical events such as the American colonization and Japanese occupation in the 20th century brought new elements to the narrative of church music in the Philippines. Filipino Christians who resisted preserving their cultural personality over external influences are reflected in the development of worship music [8]. These historical changes are essential in understanding the theological messages written in contemporary church music. In summary, the historical aspects of church service music in the Filipino community are crucial to express their theological significance. Indigenous practices fused with foreign influences and the Filipino spirit withstood the challenges of history and shaped the unique style of church music in the Philippines [9].

B. Liturgical Music

When Spanish missionaries arrived in the Philippines in the 16th century, they introduced Catholicism to the locals through Latin liturgy and Western music like Gregorian chant. However, the native converts felt that these

ceremonies didn't fully represent their faith, so they created additional services where they sang songs in Spanish and eventually in their own language [10].

In the early 1900s, Pope Pius X urged congregational participation in Latin liturgy, introducing vernacular songs alongside Latin ones. With the start of American rule, English hymns were added to the mix, allowing the congregation to sing in their language. Protestant missionaries also arrived, bringing a liturgy emphasizing congregational singing in the vernacular. The Aglipayan Church, founded during this period, separated from the Catholic Church and adopted vernacular language in its liturgy [11].

In the mid-20th century, Pope Pius XII issued his encyclical letter "Musicae Sacrae Disciplina" on sacred music. On September 3, 1958, the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued an Instruction, "De Musica Sacra," which gives the norms on sacred music [12]. It allowed for the inclusion of vernacular songs in the Latin liturgy, leading to the gradual translation of the entire liturgy into the local language [13].

Today, liturgical music in the Philippines reflects a diverse blend of traditions. Composers from various backgrounds create music in the vernacular, creating an ecumenical atmosphere where songs from different Christian denominations are embraced. Sunday liturgies, whether Catholic or Protestant, involve active participation from the congregation and incorporate Filipino cultural elements. Despite the songs' origins, what matters is that they proclaim the shared faith in Christ [14].

One challenge in liturgical music is ensuring that the music used in worship resonates with the congregation's cultural background. This involves selecting music that reflects the local community's traditions, language, and musical styles. Another issue is making liturgical music accessible to all members of the congregation. This may involve selecting music that is easy to sing or providing resources for learning new songs.

C. Secular Music

The Church acknowledges a clear distinction between sacred music and secular music. Despite the established norms of the Church, some individuals persist in the misconception that a song's sacred or secular nature is solely determined by its lyrics and that the musical style is exempt from any liturgical criteria. As mentioned earlier, it is essential to clarify that this mistaken notion is not supported by the Church's norms before and after the Second Vatican Council. Vatican Council II (1964) [15].

For instance, Hillsong's song "Power of Your Love" is a beautiful worship song that speaks about God's love's overwhelming and transformative power in our lives. This song became famous for Catholic liturgies, including as a communion song during Mass. Its message of surrendering to God's love and finding strength in Him resonates with many Catholics as they receive the Eucharist, symbolizing their union with Christ. The song's lyrics help deepen the faithful's connection to the sacrament and their commitment to living out their faith in love and service.

While the song doesn't directly reference the Eucharist, its themes of surrender, dependence on God's love, and redemption can resonate deeply with the Eucharistic experience. The Eucharist commemorates Jesus' sacrificial love on the cross, where He offered His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. The song's acknowledgment of Jesus' sacrificial love can echo the central aspect of the Eucharist, where believers partake in the memorial of Christ's sacrifice.

The song acknowledges the sacrificial love of Jesus, who gave His life for us as a source of strength and inspiration. This aligns with verses like John 3:16, which famously declares God's love for the world in sending His Son.

This clarification does not imply an exclusion of more modern compositions from being included in the Mass. However, it emphasizes that such compositions must adhere to the essential and objective criteria that define sacred music. The following are some valuable citations that illustrate this point.

First, before the Second Vatican Council: "It cannot be said that modern music and singing should be entirely excluded from Catholic worship. For, if they are not profane nor unbecoming to the sacredness of the place and

function and do not spring from a desire to achieve extraordinary and unusual effects, then our churches must admit them since they can contribute in no small way to the splendor of the sacred ceremonies, can lift the mind to higher things and foster true devotion of soul” [16].

The Council urged, "Let (composers) produce compositions which have the qualities proper to genuine sacred music." From Blessed John Paul II: “Today, the meaning of the category ‘sacred music’ has been broadened to include repertoires that cannot be part of the celebration without violating the spirit and norms of the Liturgy itself. Not all musical expressions can adequately express the mystery grasped in the fullness of the Church's faith. Consequently, not all forms of music can be considered suitable for liturgical celebrations [17].

From Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI: “As far as the Liturgy is concerned, we cannot say that one song is as good as another. Generic improvisation or the introduction of musical genres that fail to respect the meaning of the Liturgy should be avoided. As an element of the Liturgy, the song should be well integrated into the overall celebration. Consequently, everything—texts, music, execution—ought to correspond to the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, the structure of the rite, and the liturgical seasons.

Contemplating the essence, purpose, attributes, and wealth of sacred music in the Liturgy of the Church poses significant challenges in our contemporary era as we strive to rejuvenate the Mass in a manner that honors, nurtures, and advances its authentic nature.

D. Praise and Worship Music

This music genre emerged during the twentieth century within the charismatic movement of Western Evangelical Protestantism. While initially met with caution in the Catholic Church, the Charismatic Renewal, rooted in this musical tradition, has since been recognized as a valuable contributor to the re-evangelization of the Catholic faith.

However, challenges surfaced when music from the Charismatic Renewal began to dominate Roman Catholic Liturgy. The Church was already grappling with a decline in its traditional repertoire, marked by the diminishing presence of choral music, the substitution of singing Propers with hymns, and the fading prominence of chant [18].

This genre of music demands specific elements like a Worship Leader, often a full contemporary band, and backup singers or a choir. The subgenres of Praise and Worship music span a range from Country to Alternative Rock to Gospel. Lyrically, Praise and Worship Music utilizes highly personal language, often employing repetitive phrases akin to choruses in popular music from various genres.

Incorporating music into Catholic Liturgy is crucial to ensure accessibility for the congregation and facilitate active participation in singing. Unfortunately, genres like those mentioned above often present challenges due to complex rhythmic structures, wide melodic ranges, and a 'band' element that may overshadow the primary form of music in the Liturgy—congregational singing [19].

These considerations underscore the distinct functions of Praise and Worship Music and its potential discord with the Roman Catholic Liturgy. The Liturgy, deeply rooted in early Jewish traditions, is a ceremonial celebration with every action serving a prescribed liturgical function centered on the Paschal Mystery. The Roman Liturgy, meticulously shaped over time, includes readings and Propers specific to each day. Therefore, any incorporation of music into the Liturgy must be done with utmost sensitivity to these traditions. (Catholic Bishops 2020)

Music selection to attract a specific age group is being cautioned. Rather than prioritizing the genre, the music's quality should be emphasized. As a young person, I can confidently assert that young people are drawn to good music, irrespective of genre, in an age where various music sources beyond the radio, such as YouTube, iTunes, and Spotify, offer diverse options. The challenge lies more in the quality of the music rather than the specific genre.

According to Chelune and colleagues (1984), positive disclosure statements are associated with greater intimacy. One way to examine worship songs as a form of self-disclosure is to explore the messages contained within the songs. They likely contain 22 disclosures about attitudes, beliefs, and identity and positive statements about God and the worshipper's relationship with Him. Therefore, it is probable that singing praise and worship songs enables parishioners to develop greater intimacy with God and others.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

A. "Still" by Hillsong

1. Psalm 46:10 - "Be still and know that I am God" - The central refrain of "Still" draws inspiration from Psalm 46:10, where the psalmist encourages believers to find peace and confidence in God's sovereignty. The biblical context suggests that acknowledging God's authority brings assurance and stillness to the soul in the face of turmoil.

2. Matthew 8:23-27 - Calming of the Storm:

The imagery of winds and waves in "Still" parallels the biblical account of Jesus calming the storm in Matthew 8. This story emphasizes Jesus' power over nature and the importance of trusting Him amid life's storms.

3. Philippians 4:6-7 - Peace Beyond Understanding:

The theme of surrender and finding stillness in God resonates with Philippians 4:6-7, where believers are encouraged to present their anxieties to God, receiving a peace that surpasses understanding.

B. "Goodness of God"

Psalm 23:6 - "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." The song's emphasis on God's goodness aligns with the assurance in Psalm 23:6. The psalmist declares a confident belief in God's unwavering goodness and mercy throughout life's journey.

Lamentations 3:22-23 - "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases": The repeated affirmation of God's faithfulness in "Goodness of God" reflects the biblical truth in Lamentations 3:22-23. The song echoes the idea that God's love and faithfulness are constant, regardless of our circumstances.

Romans 8:28 - "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him": The overarching theme of gratitude for God's goodness aligns with the promise in Romans 8:28, emphasizing that all things work together for the good of those who love God.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION ON MUSIC

A. Music in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, songs encompass diverse themes, from love expressions, as seen in the Song of Songs, to lamentations that serve as funeral songs, such as in Lamentations. Biblical songs touch upon various subjects, including God, love, work, nature, creation, humanity, war, and virtually any conceivable topic [20]. In ancient cultures, including that of the Israelites, every facet of life was found to be expressed in their religion. The themes in Israelite songs reveal that religious songs incorporated all aspects of life, shedding light on how life intertwined with their religious beliefs [21].

Music held a crucial role in the religious practices and cult of the Old Testament. The connection was so intimate that some scholars propose that music might have originated within a cultic setting. Thus, as far back as we can trace, music and religion were interconnected in various ways [22]. The Book of Psalms says, "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. I will praise You, O Lord, among the nations and sing of you among the peoples. For great is Your love, reaching to the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Your glory be over all the earth". (Psalm 57: 7, 9-11)

Sacred music extended beyond the confines of the temple; instead, it permeated every aspect of life. Religion, being a comprehensive way of life, gave rise to religious songs for various occasions: individual prayers, expressions of love, funeral ceremonies, war, labor, and even moments of celebration like festivals. The repertoire included songs praising God, those sung during sacrificial rituals, and compositions for specific festive events. Music and singing were integral to the informal expressions of everyday religious practices and the more formalized, institutionalized cult. It was inconceivable, if not impossible, to envision religion devoid of music [23].

Within modern churches, religious music has sometimes become so controlled that the spontaneous and emotional essence or purpose of music gets overshadowed. Some individuals perceive 'church music' as a highly elevated form of music, limiting it to specific formal themes. This perception stands in stark contrast to the practices of Old Testament times. In Ancient Israel, music transcended every facet of life and could be viewed as humanity's interactive response to the world and God. This responsive tradition was dynamic, relevant to its era, and not confined to specific prescribed topics. It was not solely endorsed by the priests or Levites; instead, it served as the collective 'voice' of the people [24].

The Song of Miriam in Exodus 15:1-21, also known as the "Song of the Sea" or "Song of Moses and Miriam," is a poetic hymn of praise sung by Moses and the Israelites after their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. Many scholars regard this hymn as one of the oldest compositions in the Bible. It has been inserted at this vital juncture in the significant narrative of Exodus to celebrate God's saving power, having miraculously delivered the people from their enemies and ultimately leading them to the promised land [25].

This hymn is a simple song and a carefully crafted piece of poetry, structured with repetitive refrains and parallelism typical of ancient Hebrew poetry. It is both celebratory and didactic, recounting the events of the Exodus while glorifying God's power and sovereignty. The song attributes the victory over the Egyptians to God's mighty hand and power. It emphasizes God's role as the divine warrior who triumphs over the forces of oppression. It is a joyful expression of gratitude and celebration for God's intervention on behalf of His people. It acknowledges God's role as the source of their deliverance and affirms their trust in His continued protection and provision [26].

B. Music in the New Testament

In the New Testament, "The Christian faithful who come together as one in expectation of the Lord's coming is instructed by the Apostle Paul to sing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles together (cf. Col 3.16). Singing is the sign of the heart's joy (cf. Acts 2.46)." Indeed, this inclination toward singing and music is rooted in joy and, upon closer examination, love. Singing and creating music is inherently linked to those who share a deep affection. Recognizing our inherent human need to express praise for God. Saint Augustine asserts: "When the brethren gather in the Church, why should our time not be dedicated to the singing of sacred songs, except, of course, during reading or sermon, or while the presiding minister is in prayer, or the deacon leads the communal prayer? At times when not otherwise engaged, I cannot envision a more excellent, beneficial, and holy activity for a Christian congregation [27]."

The Canticle of Mary, also known as the Magnificat, is a profound praise and thanksgiving hymn. Mary spoke it in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:46–55) as a response to Elizabeth's greeting and the recognition of the unborn Jesus by John the Baptist in Elizabeth's womb. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Mary's voice breaks into this song of praise, a rich passage reflecting her humility, mercy, social justice, and fulfillment of God's promises. Mary's song begins with, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46–47). This opening is a testament to Mary's profound humility and unwavering recognition of God's greatness. She humbly acknowledges her lowly state ("He has looked on the humble estate of his servant") while exalting God's power and mercy [28].

This canticle, the Magnificat, unveils the spirituality of the biblical "anawim," those faithful who identified themselves as "poor" not only due to their detachment from wealth and power but also because of their profound humility, devoid of any temptation to pride, and receptive to divine grace. The Magnificat embodies this essence of "humility." It consists of praise, thanksgiving, and joyful gratitude. Yet, this personal testimony isn't isolated

or individualistic, for Mary knows her mission for humanity and her integral role in the salvation narrative. Thus, she declares, "His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him" (Luke 1:50), giving voice to all redeemed creatures who, through Jesus, find God's mercy. This hymn, therefore, is not just a personal expression of faith but a communal one, inviting us to join in this chorus of praise and thanksgiving [29].

In the original Greek text of Luke's Gospel, seven aorist verbs depict numerous actions of the Lord throughout history: demonstrating strength, scattering the proud, dethroning the mighty, uplifting the lowly, feeding the hungry, emptying the rich, and aiding Israel, his servant. Embedded in these divine acts is a visible "style" guiding the Lord's actions in history: aligning with the least. God's actual favor is ultimately revealed: towards the faithful, the humble, the hungry, and his servant Israel—the People of God characterized by simplicity and purity of heart, like Mary. Thus, this hymn invites us to become part of this faithful community, embodying purity and simplicity of heart and embracing love for God [30].

The Magnificat and the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1-21) hold significant roles in Catholic Liturgy, particularly in celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours and various liturgical texts and hymns. The Magnificat is a central component of Evening Prayer in the Catholic Liturgy. It is typically recited or sung by the assembly, cantor, or choir. It serves as a hymn of praise and thanksgiving, reflecting on the themes of God's mercy, salvation, and the role of Mary in salvation history. The Magnificat is often incorporated into the liturgies of Marian feast days. It highlights Mary's unique role as the Mother of God and her pivotal role in the story of salvation [31].

The Song of the Sea is traditionally read during the Easter Vigil, particularly during the Liturgy of the Word. It is included as part of the Old Testament readings, recounting the Israelites' liberation from slavery and their passage through the Red Sea, which prefigures the Christian understanding of baptism and liberation from sin. Like the Magnificat, the Song of the Sea may be included in liturgies commemorating events related to liberation and salvation, such as the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord or the Feast of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday). Its deliverance and divine victory themes resonate with the Paschal mystery celebrated during these feasts.

MAGISTERIAL TEACHINGS ON LITURGICAL SONGS

A. Sacrosanctum Concilium - Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (Second Vatican and Council, 1963)

The musical tradition of the universal Church is an invaluable treasure, surpassing even other art forms. Its pre-eminence lies in being integral to the solemn Liturgy, uniting sacred songs with words. Both the Holy Scripture and the fathers of the Church, including recent pontiffs such as St. Pius X, have praised sacred song, emphasizing its ministerial function in the service of the Lord [32].

Sacred music is deemed holier when closely connected to liturgical actions, enhancing prayer, fostering unity, and adding solemnity to holy rites. The Church embraces all forms of true art with the necessary qualities and admits them into divine worship.

By ecclesiastical tradition and discipline, and considering the purpose of sacred music as the glorification of God and the sanctification of the faithful, the document decrees the following:

- “Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when the divine offices are celebrated solemnly in song, with the assistance of sacred ministers and the active participation of the people.”
- “The treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care. “The preservation and promotion of sacred music, including the diligent promotion of choirs, especially in cathedral churches, are essential.
- Teaching and practicing music in seminaries, novitiates, religious houses, Catholic institutions, and schools are very important. Composers, singers, and even boys must receive genuine liturgical training.
- Gregorian chant is acknowledged as especially suited to the Roman Liturgy but is not exclusive. Other sacred music, including polyphony, is permitted if it aligns with the liturgical spirit.
- Religious singing by the people is encouraged during devotions, sacred exercises, and liturgical services, adhering to rubrics.

- The importance of peoples' musical traditions, especially in mission lands, is acknowledged. Missionaries should be trained to promote traditional music and sacred services in schools.
- Inspired by the Christian spirit, composers are urged to cultivate sacred music, producing compositions suitable for large and small choirs and the active participation of the faithful. Texts intended for singing must conform to Catholic doctrine, primarily from holy scripture and liturgical sources.

B. Musicam Sacram - The Teaching of Music in Liturgy (Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, 1967)

This document, "Musicam Sacram," issued by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship in 1967, provides instructions on the role of music in the Liturgy. The document emphasizes that music is an integral part of the Liturgy, playing a vital role in expressing and fostering the worship of the Christian community. It underlines the importance of the organic connection between music and the various elements of the liturgical celebration [33].

The primary function of liturgical music is to serve the liturgical action. It is meant to enhance the texts, prayers, and rituals of the Liturgy, uplifting the minds and hearts of the faithful toward a more profound participation in the mysteries being celebrated. The document also emphasizes the active participation of the congregation in liturgical singing. It encourages the use of simple and quickly learned musical settings, fostering the involvement of the assembly. The congregation's role in liturgical music aligns with the theological principle of active and conscious participation in the Liturgy.

Furthermore, "Musicam Sacram" recognizes the use of Latin and the vernacular in liturgical music. It advocates for preserving the treasury of sacred music in Latin while acknowledging the use of the vernacular for the people's parts, responses, and certain hymns, fostering understanding and active engagement. It also underscores the importance of preserving the sacredness and dignity of liturgical music. It calls for avoiding anything that might compromise the solemnity of the Liturgy or turn it into a mere performance.

C. Evangelii Gaudium - The Joy of the Gospel (Pope Francis, 2013)

The document encourages active participation in the Liturgy, not just as a ritual but as a dynamic and transformative encounter with God. Pope Francis calls for joyful and engaged worship that involves the whole person, promoting a deep connection between faith and daily life. While the document may not explicitly delve into liturgical music, Pope Francis has expressed his appreciation for the transformative power of music in worship in various contexts. When well-chosen and performed, Liturgical music can elevate the spirit, facilitate a sense of transcendence, and enhance the worship experience. It becomes a vehicle for expressing and reinforcing the sacred elements of the Liturgy [34].

Pope Francis advocates for an inclusive approach to Liturgy, where everyone feels welcomed and embraced regardless of their background or circumstances. This inclusivity extends to liturgical music, emphasizing the need for a diverse and culturally rich repertoire that resonates with the hearts of the faithful.

D. Catechism of the Catholic Church

The universal Church's musical tradition is an invaluable treasure, surpassing other art forms, primarily because, as a fusion of sacred music and words, it constitutes an indispensable element of solemn Liturgy. The composition and singing of inspired psalms, often accompanied by musical instruments, were closely linked to the liturgical celebrations of the Old Covenant, a tradition the Church continues and develops. Quoting scripture encourages addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, emphasizing the profound connection between singing and prayer: "He who sings prays twice [35]."

In the context of liturgical action, song and music are significant signs that are closely linked with liturgical action. Three principal criteria guide their expression: the beauty that reflects prayer, the collective participation of the assembly at designated moments, and the solemn character of the celebration. Through these criteria, song and music contribute to the purpose of liturgical words and actions – God's glory and the faithful's sanctification.

The harmony of signs, including song, music, words, and actions, becomes more expressive and fruitful when expressed within the cultural richness of the People of God who celebrate. Therefore, religious singing by the faithful is encouraged, intelligently fostered, and conforms to Church norms. It is specified that the texts intended for singing must always align with Catholic doctrine, primarily drawn from Sacred Scripture and liturgical sources.

In summary, the criteria for the proper use of singing and music in liturgical celebrations include the following:

1. "They should conform to Catholic doctrine in their texts, drawn preferably from Sacred Scripture and liturgical sources."
2. "They should be a beautiful expression of prayer."
3. "The music should be of a high quality. "
4. "Song and music should encourage the participation of the liturgical assembly. "
5. "They should express the cultural richness of the People of God and the sacred and solemn character of the celebration."

HERMENEUTICS

A. "Still" by Hillsong

The song "Still" is sung by Hillsong. Hillsong is a charismatic Christian group based in Australia. One of its hit songs familiar to Filipino youth and sung during the Lenten season is "Still."

"Still" by Hillsong Worship is a powerful Christian worship song known for its reflective and contemplative nature. The lyrics convey a profound sense of God's presence amid life's storms. The repeated refrain, "I will be still and know You are God," becomes a mantra of surrender and trust. The imagery of winds and waves emphasizes life's turbulence, contrasting with the reassurance of divine stillness and constancy.

The song explores theological themes of trust, faith, and the sovereignty of God. It draws from biblical narratives, particularly the calming of the storm in Matthew 8:23-27 and Psalm 46:10, which says, "Be still, and know that I am God." This scriptural grounding adds depth and authenticity to the lyrical content, reinforcing the song's theological foundation.

B. "Goodness of God"

'Goodness of God,' a song co-written by Jenn Johnson, is part of Bethel Music's repertoire. Bethel Music, an extension of Bethel Church, takes on the roles of crafting and disseminating worship songs, organizing events, providing teachings and resources, and managing technology. Functioning through four specialized divisions, Bethel Music's mission is to propagate Heaven's essence to nations through worship, contributing to the global expansion of God's Kingdom by embodying His manifest presence.

"Goodness of God" is a gratitude-filled worship anthem celebrating God's goodness and faithfulness. The lyrics express profound thankfulness for God's unchanging character and relentless love. The repetition of phrases like "You're never gonna let me down" emphasizes the unwavering nature of God's goodness.

The song carries a personal tone, with the singer sharing individual experiences of God's goodness. This lends authenticity to the lyrics and allows listeners to connect personally. The bridge, with lines like "And all my life, you have been faithful," encapsulates a journey of faith marked by God's consistent goodness.

C. Analysis vis a vis criteria on Liturgical Music

Both songs use dynamic elements to connect with listeners. "Still" relies on a more subdued, contemplative atmosphere, invoking a sense of calm amid chaos. On the other hand, "Goodness of God" employs a celebratory tone, fostering an atmosphere of joyful gratitude. While both songs share a foundation in Christian theology,

"Still" emphasizes surrender and trust in God's sovereignty during challenging times. Meanwhile, "Goodness of God" centers on gratitude for God's consistent goodness and faithfulness throughout one's life.

These songs disclose how one feels about God and how they view themselves. The language of traditional hymns is often more formal and less clear, with little or no personal pronouns. In contrast, the language of contemporary praise songs is informal and more direct, with many personal pronouns. Although the language in these two worship songs differs considerably, both speak of God's positive aspects and the parishioner's relationship to Him. Therefore, studying the sender's perception of what these songs mean and how they enable the sender to communicate and develop intimacy with God and others seems relevant.

The magisterial emphasizes the invaluable treasure of the Church's musical tradition, integral to the solemn Liturgy. It provides instructions on the role of music in the Liturgy, emphasizing its organic connection with liturgical actions. Pope Francis underscores the importance of joyful and inclusive worship, acknowledging the transformative power of music. However, it gives proper singing and music criteria, including alignment with Catholic doctrine, beauty, high quality, encouragement of assembly participation, and expression of cultural richness and sacred character.

The Church encourages a diverse range of sacred music. A clear distinction exists between sacred and secular music in the Church. The nature of a song's lyrics does not solely determine its sacred or secular classification; adherence to liturgical criteria is crucial. No specific kind of sacred music is prohibited if it aligns with the liturgical spirit and does not impede active participation.

By the criteria of the Catechism of the Catholic Church for the proper use of singing and music in liturgical celebrations, the following analysis is made:

1. Conformity to Catholic Doctrine:

The lyrics of "Still" do not overtly reference specific Catholic doctrines or liturgical sources. However, its themes of surrender, trust in God's sovereignty, and acknowledgment of divine stillness align with broader Christian principles in Sacred Scripture. The biblical allusions to calming the storm and being still before God resonate with passages such as Matthew 8:23-27 and Psalm 46:10.

"Goodness of God" expresses gratitude for God's consistent love and faithfulness, reflecting the biblical notion of God's goodness. While not explicitly doctrinal, it aligns with the biblical teachings emphasizing God's character, found in verses such as Psalm 23:6 and Lamentations 3:22-23.

2. Beautiful Expression of Prayer:

The song "Still" is a beautiful expression of prayer through its contemplative and reflective nature. The repeated refrain, "I will be still and know You are God," becomes a meditative mantra, inviting believers into a prayerful state of surrender and trust.

"Goodness of God" is a gratitude-filled anthem that expresses prayer through joyful celebration. The repetitive affirmations of God's goodness create a rhythmic and heartfelt prayer of thanks, making it a beautiful expression of gratitude and worship.

3. High-Quality Music:

The music of "Still" by Hillsong Worship is known for its high production quality. The gentle piano, gradual build-up, and ethereal harmonies contribute to a sonically rich and emotionally impactful composition, meeting the criteria for high-quality music.

Bethel Music's "Goodness of God" also meets the criterion of high-quality music. Its dynamic arrangement, from simplicity to a triumphant crescendo, showcases musical excellence, enhancing the worship experience.

4. Encouragement of Liturgical Assembly Participation:

The contemplative nature of "Still" encourages active participation by creating a space for personal reflection and communal stillness. The simplicity of the lyrics and melody allows for broad participation within the liturgical assembly.

With its joyful and repetitive nature, "Goodness of God" actively encourages participation in the liturgical assembly. The song's celebratory tone invites congregational singing and engagement.

5. Cultural Richness and Sacred Character:

While "Still" does not explicitly express cultural richness, its sacred character is evident through the emphasis on God's sovereignty and the reverence conveyed in its meditative tone. The song's global popularity also attests to its universal appeal.

"Goodness of God" expresses cultural richness through its diverse and global appeal. The song's widespread use in various Christian traditions reflects its ability to resonate with the cultural diversity of the People of God. Its sacred character is evident in the emphasis on God's goodness and faithfulness.

In conclusion, both "Still" and "Goodness of God" align with several criteria outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, presenting themselves as potential expressions of prayer within the liturgical context. Their themes, musical quality, and encouragement of participation contribute to their suitability for worship within the Catholic tradition.

The praise and worship songs like the song "Still" and the "Goodness of God" by the Bethel Church align with the Catholic Church's criteria for their use in liturgical services. Other contemporary songs are also applicable to be sung in Catholic worship as long as they follow the criteria of the use of music as set by the magisterium. Interpretations of songs like "Still" and "Goodness of God" explain their theological content in a Catholic liturgical context. "Still" expresses a deep faith in the unwavering nature of God, while "God's Goodness" focuses on God's kindness and love. Logically, these hymns correspond to aspects of Catholic theology that emphasize faith, gratitude, and acceptance of God's eternal life. However, the reception of these songs in Catholic worship can vary depending on local church guidelines and the discretion of church officials. While rational interpretation may reflect theological coherence, actual acceptance of church services depends on evaluating parish priests, church committees, and the local magistrate.

CONCLUSION

This paper explores the theological aspects of using Contemporary Praise and Worship music in Philippine liturgical celebrations, focusing on identifying and classifying Catholic and non-Catholic music. Through an analysis of songs like "Still" and "Goodness of God," we have explored how contemporary worship music can align with the Catholic Church's criteria for liturgical music, emphasizing themes of faith, gratitude, and God's eternal goodness. These two songs can be valuable additions to Catholic liturgical celebrations. Their ability to express profound theological truths and foster personal and communal intimacy with God makes them powerful tools for worship.

However, as the Church continues to evolve the landscape of liturgical music, a thoughtful and discerning approach will ensure that contemporary songs enhance rather than detract from the sacred liturgy. In incorporating contemporary music into the liturgy, this paper underscored the importance of careful selection and evaluation of contemporary music by church leaders and musicians to uphold the sanctity and integrity of the worship service.

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