

Notes from the Choir Loft

chant tradition, ratified by the magisterium, written about by many popes, and we have a responsibility as dedicated Catholics to follow the required music for specific Masses.

I'll leave you with this thought. Every single solitary Mass that is offered as a low Mass can be offered as a High Mass, every single solitary Mass has specific Gregorian Chant written for it and any music director can find out what those are if they're interested in following the commands of the popes in regard to the Liturgical music at Mass.

The writings of the Popes on the subject are fairly plain and can be easily accessed online at the Vatican website. Two very important ones are,

Tra Le Sollecitudini - Pope St. Pius X

Musicae Sacrae - Pope Pius XII

I'm realizing that I need to return to the informative when it comes to sacred music. And I think I need to begin with the words "Sacred Music" as a concept. Those words have considerable misconception surrounding them. I'm sitting here listening to Rachmaninoff's Vespers, the last large sacred work written before the Communists took over in Russia and banned all sacred music.... well, anything sacred; religion is ALWAYS the enemy of the despot. The Vespers are based upon old Slavonic chants, some older than many of our own Gregorian chants, and they are stunning; this is a work of amazing beauty and something that can't be conveyed in words.

So with that in mind, I highly recommend this recording of that piece Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff, Charles Bruffy, Phoenix Chorale, Kansas City Chorale – All-Night Vigil, Label: Chandos – CHSA 5148

Music is music because words won't do; this is what St. Pius X stated (understated in reality) when he called it the outpouring of the soul in song. Sacred music, hmmm. What is sacred

music? Catholics seem to argue about what makes sacred music. Most of the time what Catholics mean when they say sacred music is the music they grew up with and heard when they went to Mass. This concept as such is a grave danger, because if that's your logical reason as to why you do or don't like music at Mass, then think about the fact that a fair number of Catholics under 40 who were raised in the Church consider "Eagles Wings" to be good Catholic music. However, when we talk about the basics of what we use in the Mass, what we're really talking about is LITURGICAL MUSIC. What's the difference, you may ask. Well, one is music with a sacred text and the other is music set aside for the liturgy. One can be guided by opinion and nostalgia and all things emotional without disobeying the popes, and the other is quite literally required by the magisterium of the Church.

I once had a woman ask me why I "chose those particular Propers" to sing for a specific Sunday. I had to respond to her that I didn't choose those Propers; they were chosen for us by centuries of Gregorian