

Diocesan Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art:
Knowing the Past to Prepare for the Future

by the Reverend Monsignor John J. M. Foster, J.C.D.
Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the
Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA

In the fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the evangelist tells us that, after seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the mountain. His disciples came to him, and he began teaching them (Mt 5:1–2). After the Beatitudes, Jesus presented the sayings on salt and light, which Daniel Harrington tells us, “serve to define the identity of those who follow Jesus faithfully.”¹

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house” (Mt 5:13–15, RNAB).

As followers of the Lord Jesus who have been baptized into his passion, death, and resurrection, we are the salt of the earth and light of the world. To be salt and light, especially in today's world, is a challenge for any Christian, but for us who have taken on diocesan and parochial responsibilities for promoting the liturgical life in our particular churches, Jesus' teaching provides additional challenges.

Given the seemingly endless number of liturgies to prepare, the constant barrage of phone calls and emails from the Christian faithful yearning to have their questions answered, and growing piles of articles and books to read to keep up-to-date on sacramental and liturgical issues, members of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art and worship office staff members might understandably feel like salt that has lost its taste. On the other hand, commission members and office personnel might prefer to go about their service quietly—putting their lamp under a bushel basket, so to speak—as they work behind the scenes to provide the diocesan bishop the advice he seeks, to conduct minister formation workshops throughout the diocese, or to write articles and bulletin inserts to catechize the Christian faithful that “in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, by the Head and his members.”²

This forty-sixth meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions provides us an opportunity to explore the development and juridical nature of liturgical commissions in

¹ Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina, vol. 1, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991) 83.

² Vatican Council II, Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, December 4, 1963, 7: AAS 56 (1964) 101. Translation from International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982) margin reference 7. Hereafter, citations from this source will be cited as *DOL* followed by the margin reference.

their historical and contemporary situations. This review, then, will prepare us to look ahead to encourage the effective use of the commissions in assisting the diocesan bishop in the exercise of his sanctifying office. To this end, today's presentation is divided into three parts: the twentieth century development of commissions for liturgy, music, and art; the present norms pertaining to these commissions; and, finally, some suggestions to prepare for their future. It is my hope that these reflections might be of some small assistance in reinvigorating our identity to be salt and light with renewed strength and insight as liturgical collaborators with our bishops in this portion of the Lord's vineyard.

Part I: The Twentieth Century Development of Diocesan Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art

The historical development of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art in the twentieth century can be divided into three distinct periods: the development of each commission in the first half of the twentieth century, the maturation of these commissions at the Second Vatican Council, and the flourishing of these juridic institutes in the post-conciliar years.

A. The Early Twentieth Century Development of Diocesan Commissions

Diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art each had their day in the ecclesiastical spotlight in the first half of the twentieth century, thus laying the foundation for their mandate in the Second Vatican Council's *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

1. Pius X and Commissions for Music

Sacred music and liturgy held a special place in the heart of Pope St. Pius X (1903–1914). Within months of his election as Roman pontiff, Pius issued the motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* on sacred music. In it he offered a variety of norms for the use of sacred music in the liturgy. In addition, Pius also provided for a diocesan institute to assist the bishop in carrying out these norms.

For the exact execution of what has been herein laid down, the bishops, if they have not already done so, are to institute in their dioceses a special commission composed of persons really competent in sacred music, and to this commission let them entrust in the manner they find most suitable the task of watching over the music executed in their churches. Nor are they to see merely that the music is good in itself, but also that it is adapted to the powers of the singers and be always well executed.³

³ Pius X, Motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini*, November 22, 1903: ASS 36 (1903) 338: “Per l'esatta esecuzione di quanto viene qui stabilito, i Vescovi, se non l'hanno già fatto, istituiscano nella loro diocesi una Commissione speciale di persone veramente competenti in cose di musica sacra, alla quale, nel modo che giudicheranno più opportuno, sia affidato l'incarico d'invigilare sulle musiche che si vanno eseguendo nelle loro chiese. Nè badino soltanto che le musiche siano per se buone, ma che rispondano altresì alle

What one first notices about the pope's directive is that diocesan commissions for music were not an innovation in some places. The phrase "if they have not already done so" indicates that music commissions already existed in some dioceses. With the present norm, the pope mandated them in all dioceses.

The second point to consider concerns the qualification for membership on the commission. These music commissions were to be "composed of persons really competent in sacred music." The competency of commission members is an issue we will see repeated throughout this historical review.

Third, the principal role Pius X assigned to diocesan commissions for music was one of vigilance. These commissions were to watch over (1) the quality of the music used in churches and (2) how the music was used in the liturgy. Each bishop was free—within existing liturgical law—to order the commission's work as he saw fit. Beyond these points, few other details were mentioned.⁴

Before moving on, it is worth noting that, despite Pius X's mandate (*instituiscono*) that all dioceses have a commission on music, no mention of these commissions was found in the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The extra-codal nature of, first, commissions for music—but later for liturgy and art commissions—has its advantages and disadvantages.

2. Diocesan Commissions for Sacred Art in Italy

At the request of Pope Pius XI (1922–1939), Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, the Secretary of State, issued a circular letter to the bishops of Italy concerning the "reasonable safekeeping" of "the exterior trappings and the material form of the supernatural life of the Church: sacred buildings, liturgical furnishings, chalices and reliquaries, vestments and paintings."⁵ To this end, Cardinal Gasparri announced the establishment of a Central Commission for Sacred Art for Italy. The central commission was charged to coordinate and assist the activities of the diocesan (or regional) commissions for sacred art that were to be established.⁶ These diocesan commissions, which were called an "organ of episcopal activity," had four tasks: to compile an inventory of art objects; to work with the formation and regulation of diocesan museums; to examine the design

forze dei cantori e vengano sempre bene eseguite." Translation from R. Kevin Seasoltz, ed., *The New Liturgy: A Documentation 1903–1965* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966) 9–10.

⁴ See Robert F. Hayburn, *Papal Legislation on Sacred Music 95 A.D. to 1977 A.D.* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1979) 195–250, especially 230, on the similarities and differences between Pius X's 1893 *votum* as bishop of Mantua and his 1903 *motu proprio* concerning diocesan music commissions.

⁵ Segreteria di Stato, Circular letter *Istituzione in Roma di una Commissione centrale di arte sacra per la conservazione del patrimonio artistico delle chiese*, September 1, 1924, Prot. number 34215, in *Il Monitore Ecclesiastico* 36 (1924) 332: "Oltre ai codici, alle antiche carte, agli incunaboli e stampati preziosi delle biblioteche ed archivi, pei quali già sono state emanate disposizioni in proposito, trattasi ora della intelligente tutela di tutto il rimanente tesoro, che è come la veste esteriore e la forma materiale della vita soprannaturale della Chiesa, edifici sacri, suppellettili liturgiche, calici e reliquiari, paramenti cultuali e quadri." Translation of this document is by the Reverend Monsignor Ronny Jenkins.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 333.

of new buildings and the expansion, remodeling, or restoration of existing ones; and to promote artistic taste and culture in dioceses and regions.⁷

While the circular letter did not provide any direction for the structure of diocesan art commissions or the qualifications of their members, its provisions for the organization and membership of the Italian Central Commission could be applied to the diocesan or regional commissions. The letter stated: “This [Central] Commission will be composed of a President, a Secretary, and a group of consultative members, whether ecclesiastics or laity, chosen by the Holy See, residing in Rome and expert in the disciplines related to the liturgical sciences and the fine arts.”⁸ Since nothing to the contrary prevented it, bishops were free to choose clerics or lay persons to comprise the membership of their own commissions.⁹

Cardinal Gasparri’s circular letter was an executive document expressing the desire of Pius XI.¹⁰ Because it was addressed only to the bishops of Italy, the establishment of the Central Commission (and subsequently, the diocesan commissions) concerned only the bishops and dioceses within that nation. While neither legislative nor universal in nature, the circular letter institutionalized the Holy See’s concern for the importance of sacred art and its preservation through the establishment of diocesan commissions.

3. Pius XII and Liturgical Commissions

The climax of the pre-conciliar liturgical reform movement came during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII. His 1947 encyclical *Mediator Dei* summarized the theology of the liturgical reform movement and set the stage for its future development. Among his many themes, Pius turned his attention to ways in which the participation of the faithful in the liturgy was to be promoted. In addition to the bishop’s role of vigilance, the pope wrote:

It is also our wish that in each diocese an advisory committee to promote the liturgical apostolate should be established, similar to that which cares for sacred music and art, so that with your watchful guidance everything may be carefully carried out in accordance with the prescriptions of the Apostolic See.¹¹

⁷ Ibid., 333–334.

⁸ Ibid., 333: “Essa sarà composta d’un Presidente, d’un Segretario e d’un gruppo di membri consulenti, sì ecclesiastici che laici, scelti dalla Santa Sede, residenti in Roma ed esperti nelle discipline attinenti alle scienze liturgiche ed alle arti belle.”

⁹ The letter used the term *laici* without further qualification. It seems prudent to assume that *laici* was to be interpreted in light of canon 1280 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law, which stated that the opinion of prudent and expert men (*prudentes ac peritos viros*) was to be considered by the ordinary before he permitted the restoration of sacred images, etc.

¹⁰ Segreteria di Stato, 332.

¹¹ Pius XII, Encyclical letter *Mediator Dei*, November 20, 1947: AAS 39 (1947) 562: “Quam ad rem id etiam Nobis in votis est, ut in singulis Dioecesibus, quemadmodum Consilium habetur sacris musicis et artibus tutandis, sic Consilium quoque constituatur ad liturgicum provehendum apostolatatum, ut vigilantia cura vestra diligenter omnia ex Apostolicae Sedis praescriptionibus eveniat.” Translation from Seasoltz, *The New Liturgy*, 136.

Two comments on this important text are in order. First, while these liturgical commissions were to work with the bishop to ensure that “everything may be carried out in accordance with the prescriptions of the Apostolic See,”¹² their primary function was “to promote the liturgical apostolate.” Broadly defined, the commission’s tasks included education and vigilance over abuses.¹³ Also, because the liturgical apostolate belonged first to the bishop, the commission for liturgy was only advisory to him. Yet given the renewed way of understanding the Church’s life of worship, diocesan commissions for liturgy became “as it were the prolonged arms of the Ordinaries themselves, in order to supervise, regulate, promote and bring to its full development the whole field of liturgy, both as worship and as means of salvation.”¹⁴ The organization of the commission was left to the bishop, though the pope signaled that its form be similar to that of the commissions for music and art.

4. Roman Instructions on Art and Music

Not surprisingly, the decade following *Mediator Dei* proved to be a busy one for the liturgical reform movement at all levels of the Church.¹⁵ Two Roman dicasteries issued instructions that contained norms for commissions for art and music.

a. The 1952 Instruction *De Arte sacra*

On June 30, 1952, the Sacred Congregation for the Holy Office issued *De Arte Sacra*,¹⁶ an instruction addressed to the local ordinaries¹⁷ of the universal Church. In two places, the document cited the diocesan commission on sacred art.

In order that local Ordinaries may more safely ask and receive of the diocesan Commission for Sacred Art advice which is in perfect accord with the demands of the Holy See and of sacred art itself, let them see to it that the aforesaid Commission be provided with members who are not only competent in the field of art but also firm in their allegiance to the Christian faith, brought up in piety and ready to follow the definite norms which are prescribed by ecclesiastical authority.¹⁸

¹² Josef Löw, “Official Liturgical Commissions,” *Worship* 29 (1955) 441–442.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 442.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 443.

¹⁵ See Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948–1975*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990) 7–10, concerning the work of the papal commission for liturgical reform established by Pius XII in 1948.

¹⁶ Congregation of the Holy Office, Instruction *De Arte Sacra*, June 30, 1952: AAS 44 (1952) 542–548.

¹⁷ Canon 198 of the 1917 code stated that residential bishops and their vicars general were local ordinaries.

¹⁸ Congregation of the Holy Office, Instruction *De Arte Sacra*, June 30, 1952: AAS 44 (1952) 545: “Quo autem tutius locorum Ordinarii ex Dioecesana pro Arte Sacra Commissione exquirere atque accipere valeant consilium, quod cum Apostolicae Sedis praescriptis atque ipsius artis sacrae fine minime dissideat, curent iidem ut in praedictum collegium cooptentur viri, qui non modo sint arte periti, sed etiam

For those dioceses where commissions for sacred art had been established, the document provided some qualifications for membership on these commissions: competence in sacred art, adherence to the Christian faith, piety, and ecclesiastical discipline. In light of the abuses that the document desired to correct and the specific qualifications enumerated, it may be surmised that the Holy Office attributed the current situation to an untrained group of people giving poor or unorthodox advice to the local ordinary—a trend the Holy Office hoped to reverse.

The instruction also provided a process for dioceses that did not have a commission for sacred art. The lack of trained personnel did not exempt these local ordinaries from consultation with experts. The Holy Office stated: “If experts are lacking on the Diocesan Commissions, or if doubts or controversies arise, let the local Ordinaries consult the metropolitan Commissions or the Roman Commission on Sacred art.”¹⁹ The document presumed that, because of their larger size, metropolitan sees would have trained members on their commissions for sacred art. Furthermore, the Holy Office established a procedure for cases of doubt or controversy whereby the local ordinary or commission itself could consult the metropolitan or Roman commissions.

b. The 1958 Instruction *De Musica Sacra*

Diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art were brought together in the 1958 instruction from the Sacred Congregation of Rites entitled *De Musica sacra*. The instruction concluded with the discussion of diocesan commissions.

A special Commission for Sacred Music must exist in every diocese, as has been required since the time of St. Pius X. The members of such commissions, priests and laymen, are named by the local ordinary. He should choose men who have training and experience in the various kinds of sacred music.

Since sacred music is closely linked with the liturgy and the latter with sacred art, a Commission for Sacred Art and a Commission for the Sacred Liturgy should be established in every diocese. But there is nothing which forbids, and sometimes it is even advisable, that the three abovementioned commissions meet together instead of separately and, by an exchange of opinions, discuss and try to solve their common problems.

Moreover, local ordinaries should require that the commissions meet as often as circumstances require. It is also desirable that the ordinaries themselves sometimes preside at these meetings.²⁰

christianae fidei firmiter adhaereant, ad pietatem sint informati et certas rationes, ab auctoritate ecclesiastica definitas, animo libenti sequantur.” Translation from *Canon Law Digest*, 3:511–512; hereafter cited as *CLD*.

¹⁹ Congregation of the Holy Office, 545: “4. Si in dioecesanis Commissionibus desint periti, aut dubia vel controversiae exoriantur, consulant locorum Ordinarii metropolitanas Commissiones vel Romanam de arte sacra Commissionem.” Translation from *CLD*, 3: 511.

²⁰ Congregation of Rites, Instruction *De Musica Sacra*, September 3, 1958: AAS 50 (1958) 663: “In unaquaque dioecesi peculiaris *Commissio de Musica sacra*, inde a temporibus S. Pii X, exsistere debet. Huius Commissionis socii, sive sacerdotes sint, sive laici, ab Ordinario loci nominandi sunt, qui viros

Article 118 of *De Musica sacra* reiterated the obligatory nature of diocesan commissions for music: these commissions must exist (*existere debet*) in every diocese.²¹ It is also worth noting the amount of detail the instruction gave regarding membership, qualifications, and meeting intervals.

Finally, addressed to the entire Church, the instruction brought together in a systematic way for the first time the three advisory groups to the bishop in matters liturgical. The Congregation of Rites realized the inter-connectedness of the commissions for liturgy, music, and art. Indeed, the congregation went so far as to recommend that the three commissions, while remaining separate bodies, meet together often—even with the bishop himself presiding.

This review of the early twentieth century developments in diocesan liturgical structures has shown that the *motu proprio* of Pius X (for music commissions), the circular letter of Cardinal Gasparri (for art commissions in Italy), and the encyclical letter of Pius XII (for liturgical commissions) promoted the reform of the liturgy in the life of the diocesan church. The general nature of these documents found specification in the 1952 instruction *De Arte Sacra* of the Holy Office and the 1958 instruction *De Musica sacra* from the Sacred Congregation of Rites. What remains unknown is how widespread and effective these commissions were during this period.

B. Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art at the Second Vatican Council

Groundwork for the Second Vatican Council began shortly after Pope St. John XXIII announced his intention to convoke it on January 25, 1959. To the Preparatory Commission on the Sacred Liturgy was entrusted the drafting of a schema on the liturgy for discussion when the conciliar fathers gathered at the Vatican in the fall of 1962. In two sections, this portion of the presentation will examine how the articles on commissions for liturgy, music, and art in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* reached their final form.

1. Pre-Conciliar Developments for Diocesan Commissions

Under the leadership of Cardinal Gaetano Cicognani, the Preparatory Commission on the

seligat, in variis Musicae sacrae generibus doctrina et experientia peritos.

“Nil prohibet quominus plurimum dioecesium Ordinarii Commissionem communem constituent.

“Quoniam vero Musica sacra arcte cum Liturgia, et haec cum Arte sacra connectitur, in unaquaque dioecesi *Commissiones* quoque instituendae sunt *de Arte sacra* et *de sacra Liturgia*. Nil autem prohibet, immo quandoque consulendum, ut tres memoratae Commissiones non seorsim, sed una simul conveniat et, collatis consiliis, communia negotia pertractare et solvere satagant.

“Ceterum, Ordinarii locorum invigilent, ut praefatae Commissiones, prout rerum adiuncta postulaverint, crebrius conveniant; desiderandum quoque, ut his conventibus Ordinarii ipsi quandoque praesideant.” Translation from Seasoltz, *New Liturgy*, 282.

²¹ See Ferdinando Dell’Oro, S.D.B., “The Instruction for the Implementation of the Constitution,” in *The Liturgy of Vatican II*, vol. 1, ed. William Baraúna and (in English) by Jovian Lang, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966) 326, n. 81.

Sacred Liturgy unanimously approved the liturgy schema at its third plenary meeting January 11–13, 1962. Diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art were mentioned in Chapter I (General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy) and Chapter VIII (On Sacred Art). All three commissions first appeared in the final section of Chapter I concerned with the promotion of pastoral-liturgical action.

35. For the same reason every diocese is to have a commission on the liturgy, under the direction of the bishop, for promoting the liturgical apostolate.

Sometimes it may be advisable for several dioceses to form among themselves one single commission.

36. Besides the commission on the liturgy, every diocese is to establish commissions for music and art.

These three commissions must work in closest collaboration.²²

Three observations can be made about this excerpt from the schema on the liturgy. First, diocesan commissions have as their *raison d'être* the promotion of the pastoral-liturgical action. The preparatory commission realized, of course, that the liturgical apostolate would not be promoted as it should unless these commissions were required. This brings us to the second observation: the verbs used in the schema. Because laws and norms direct a specific behavior from the intended audience, canonists are attentive to the verbs and their tenses used in decrees. The use of *habeatur* for liturgical commissions and *constituantur* for music and art commissions stated clearly the preparatory commission's view that these three commissions would be essential if the liturgical renewal was to succeed. Finally, despite the fact that every diocese was required to have a liturgical commission, the schema supported the formation of regional commissions for the liturgy.

Commissions for sacred art made a repeat appearance in Chapter VIII of the schema in two articles.

103. [*In judging works of art, experts are to be employed*]. In judging works of art, ordinaries are required to hear the diocesan commission on sacred art and, if the case warrants, other very expert men. However, in cases which are considered in all respects

²² Schema propositum a Commissione Liturgica, *Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II Apparando*, Series II, Praeparatoria (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1964) II, pars III, 42 (hereafter cited as *Acta et Documenta*, Praeparatoria): "35. [*Commssiones liturgicae dioecesanae*]. Eadem ratione, in singulis dioecesibus Commissio de sacra Liturgia habeatur, ad actionem liturgicam, moderante Episcopo, promovendam.

"Opportunum aliquando evadere potest ut plures dioeceses unam Commissionem constituent.

"36. [*Commissiones de Musica sacra et de Arte sacra*]. Praeter Commissionem de sacra Liturgia, in quavis dioecesi constituantur etiam Commissiones de Musica sacra et de Arte sacra.

"Necessarium est ut hae tres Commissiones consociatis viribus adlaborent." This translation is amended from the text in *DOL*, 1, nos. 45–46; it is used for purposes of continuity, clarity, and making appropriate changes.

more difficult, the counsel of other bishops of the province or region and of their experts may be sought. If even the judgment of those consulted is discovered not to be prudent, they [the ordinaries] may propose the matter to the Holy See.

104. [*Commissions of sacred art*]. Commissions of sacred art, whether diocesan, provincial, national, or even international, are to be comprised, as much as possible, of both cleric and lay experts.²³

Article 103 used strong language in requiring ordinaries to hear (*tenentur audire*) the diocesan sacred art commission; consultation with other experts was optional. The remainder of the article spelled out the process seen above in the Holy Office's 1952 instruction for judging works of art. In specifying the various levels at which art commissions operated, article 104 expressed the desire for the participation of both cleric and lay experts.

The next stop for the liturgy schema was the Preparatory Central Commission established by John XXIII to oversee the work of the various preparatory commissions. Only a few comments were made at the March 26, 1962 meeting about articles 35 and 36 and the March 31–April 2, 1962 meeting on chapters VI–VIII on sacred furnishings, music, and art.²⁴

Following approval by the Central Commission, the liturgy schema (as for each schema reviewed by the Central Commission) was remanded to a subcommission to incorporate changes made by the Central Commission.²⁵ This subcommission prepared the final texts of the various schemata for the pope's approval so they could be sent to the bishops. Two changes in article 36 can be traced to the period when this subcommission was at work. First, the phrase *quantum fieri potest* was inserted after the verb *constituantur*.²⁶ Its effect was to soften the obligatory force of the norm requiring commissions for music and art. Second, after stating that the commissions for liturgy, music, and art are to work together, the following phrase was added: "indeed it will often be best to fuse the three of them into one single commission."²⁷ The addition of these words was an innovation for diocesan commissions. Whereas the 1958 instruction *De Musica Sacra*

²³ *Acta et Documenta*, Praeparatoria, II, pars III, 467: "103. [*In diiudicandis artis operibus, periti adhibeantur*]. In diiudicandis artis operibus, Ordinarii tenentur audire Commissionem dioecesanam de Arte sacra et, si casus ferat, alios viros valde peritos. In causis autem quae, undique spectatae, difficiliore evenerint, adeant consilia ceterorum provinciae vel regionis Episcoporum eorumque peritorum. Si etiam horum consultu iudicium tutum non invenitur, rem Sanctae Sedi proponant.

"104. [*Commissiones de Arte sacra*]. Commissiones de Arte sacra tum dioecesanae, tum provinciales vel regionales vel nationales vel etiam internationales, congregentur, in quantum possibile, ex utroque clero et laicis peritis."

²⁴ See John J. M. Foster, *Liturgical Commissions and Offices: A Resource Book* (Washington, DC: The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 2001) 23–25.

²⁵ See Bugnini, 26–27 and Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Struggle for the Council During the Preparation of Vatican II (1960–1962)," in *The History of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, English ed. Joseph Komonchak, vol. 1 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995) 313–317.

²⁶ See Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum Secundum, *Schemata Constitutionum et Decretorum, de quibus disceptabitur in Concilii sessionibus*, Series Prima (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1962) 170.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: "immo non raro congruum erit ut in unam Commissionem coalescant."

encouraged the three commissions to meet together sometimes, the proposed schema went a step further to encourage the establishment of one super-commission, which could perform the tasks of each individual commission in those areas where individual commissions would not be possible.

Article 103 of the schema was also the subject of change. The verb *tenentur audire* in the first sentence of article 103 was changed to *curent audire* in the schema,²⁸ softening the intent of the original text, which understood diocesan commissions to have an integral role in promoting the liturgical apostolate. Without obliging bishops to establish these institutes, it could be argued, the success of the liturgical movement would be hampered.²⁹ While it cannot be presumed that diocesan commissions were the subject of such intent, Annibale Bugnini intimated that some of the preparatory commission's work under Cardinal Cicognani was undermined by his successor Cardinal Arcadio Larraona during the subcommission's tenure.³⁰

2. Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art at the Second Vatican Council

Not surprisingly, diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art were not a focal point for heated discussion at the council. This is not to say, however, that these commissions received no attention from the assembled fathers during the first and second periods of the council. The debate on chapter I of the schema saw only a few bishops make oral and written interventions.³¹ Chapter I—including the two articles on commissions for liturgy, music, and art—was overwhelmingly approved during the thirty-sixth general congregation on December 7, 1962.³²

The two articles on art commissions were taken up by the council when chapters V–VIII of the schema were discussed in mid-November of 1962. Here, again, the interventions were few.³³ In revising the chapter on sacred art, the conciliar commission on the liturgy, chaired by

²⁸ See *Schemata Constitutionum et Decretorum*, 200. Note that articles 103 and 104 were renumbered as articles 101 and 102 in this latter draft text.

²⁹ See Löw, 447.

³⁰ See Bugnini, 27.

³¹ Bishop Philip Benitez Avalos of Paraguay encouraged national liturgical commissions to work in coordination with diocesan commissions (Vatican Council II, *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* [Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970] I, pars I, 578). The Italian Bishop Blase D'Agostino recognized the impossibility of establishing such commissions in every diocese and suggested adding the phrase “in singulis dioecibus, si possibile est” (*Acta Synodalia*, I, pars I, 591). In a written intervention, Bishop Dragutin Nežic of Croatia reminded the conciliar liturgy commission that diocesan commissions—whether of liturgy, music, or art—do not possess any jurisdiction; they are merely consultative (*Acta Synodalia*, I, pars I, 642).

³² See *Acta Synodalia*, I, pars IV, 384. The votes were cast as follows: 1,922 fathers voted *placet*, 11 voted *non placet*, and 180 voted *placet iuxta modum*. Five null votes were also cast.

³³ Bishop Bonaventure Leo De Uriarte Bengoa from Peru applauded the use of experts in judging works of art and the importance of artistic development in the Church (*Acta Synodalia*, I, pars II, 701). Bishop Cesar Gatimu from Kenya asked where artists and other experts in the laws and traditions of the liturgy might be found (*Acta Synodalia*, I, pars II, 714). Archbishop Maurice Roy from Canada encouraged the commission for sacred art to promote through suitable means worthy Christian art, involving anyone with an interest that touches on the arts (*Acta Synodalia*, I, pars II, 754).

Cardinal Larraona, made recommendations to the fathers in the form of several changes and one emendation. A formal amendment was made to delete the second of the two articles, because it basically repeated the already-approved article 46 in calling for the establishment of commissions of sacred art.³⁴ In addition, several changes were made to the remaining article. The local ordinary was the one specifically designated to make the judgment on works of art. The verb in the first sentence was changed from *curent audire* to simply *audiant*, thus strengthening the local ordinary's obligation to consult the commission in the direction of *tenentur audire* in the schema originally proposed by the preparatory liturgy commission in January 1962. In addition, reference was made to articles 44, 45, and 46 in Chapter I on national and diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art. Finally, a new paragraph was added admonishing ordinaries—local and others—to exercise vigilance concerning valuable furnishings and works of art. The chapter on sacred art and sacred furnishings was approved at the fifty-ninth general congregation on October 31, 1963.³⁵

On December 4, 1963 at the close of the second period of the council, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was enacted by a vote of 2,147 to 4 and promulgated by Pope Paul VI.³⁶ The promulgated text of the excerpts concerning diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art reads:

45. For the same reason every diocese is to have a commission on the liturgy, under the direction of the bishop, for promoting the liturgical apostolate.

Sometimes it may be advisable for several dioceses to form among themselves one single commission, in order to promote the liturgy by means of shared consultation.

46. Besides the commission on the liturgy, every diocese, as far as possible, should have commissions for music and art.

These three commissions must work in closest collaboration; indeed it will often be best to fuse the three of them into one single commission.

126. When deciding on works of art, local Ordinaries shall give hearing to the diocesan commission on sacred art and, if need be, to others who are especially expert, as well as to the commissions referred to in art. 44, 45, and 46.

Ordinaries must be very careful to see that sacred furnishings and valuable works of art are not disposed of or damaged, for they are the adornment of the house of God.³⁷

³⁴ *Acta Synodalia*, II, pars IV, 10.

³⁵ See *Acta Synodalia*, II, pars IV, 77. Of the 1,941 fathers casting ballots, 1,838 voted *placet*, 94 *non placet*, and 94 *placet iuxta modum*.

³⁶ *Acta Synodalia*, II, pars VI, 407.

³⁷ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, AAS 56 (1964) 112–113 and 132: “45. Eadem ratione, in singulis dioecibus Commissio de sacra Liturgia habeatur, ad actionem liturgicam, moderante Episcopo, promovendam.

“Opportunum aliquando evadere potest ut plures dioeceses unam Commissionem constituent, quae, collatis consiliis, rem liturgicam provehat.

“46. Praeter Commissionem de sacra Liturgia, in quavis dioecesi constituentur, quantum fieri

The role of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art was strengthened and weakened in the conciliar process. With *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, diocesan commissions were no longer considered as a wish or “pet project” of an individual pope or Roman dicastery. The entire college of bishops—head and members—endorsed these important institutes, “under the direction of the bishop,” for the promotion of the liturgical apostolate. In addition, the norms decreed by the council in articles 45–46 and 126 codified the various papal and dicasterial documents that preceded them. The mind of the Church was clear, and what it said applied to the entire Church. Even bishops from areas where there were few experts, most especially Africa, supported these commissions.

Unfortunately, though, some of the force of diocesan commissions was lost in the drafting process. The addition of the phrase “as far as possible” in article 46 for commissions for music and art and the continued, though partial, softening of the verb *audire* in article 126 on art commissions are two examples in the shift away from the preceptive language found in the 1958 instruction *De Musica Sacra*. In addition and most likely unforeseen, diocesan commissions suffered a further diminishment of their role with the encouragement of national liturgical commissions,³⁸ prompting Josef Jungmann to observe that the diocesan commission’s “sphere of work will now be limited to a large extent by that of the commission at the bishops’ conference.”³⁹

Finally, the mention of commissions for art in the chapter on sacred art leads one to question why no similar mention was made of music commissions in the chapter on sacred music. At no time in the schema’s preparation was there any mention in the chapter on music of an additional reference to music commissions,⁴⁰ despite the intervention of Bishop Charles Buswell of Pueblo to correct this oversight.⁴¹ In all likelihood, however, this omission stemmed from a desire not to repeat what had already been established in article 46.

The fathers assembled at the Second Vatican Council supported diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art both in theory and in fact. How these commissions would operate in the particular churches was a question left to others.

potest, etiam Commissiones de Musica sacra et de Arte sacra.

“Necessarium est ut hae tres Commissiones consociatis viribus adlaborent; immo non raro congruum erit ut in unam Commissionem coalescant.

“126. In diiudicandis artis operibus Ordinarii locorum audiant Commissionem dioecesanam de Arte sacra, et, si casus ferat, alios viros valde peritos, necnon Commissiones de quibus in articulis 44, 45, 46.

“Sedulo advigilent Ordinarii ne sacra supellex vel opera pretiosa, utpote ornamenta domus Dei, alienentur vel disperdantur.” Translation from *DOL*, 45–46 and 126.

³⁸ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 44; AAS 56 (1964) 112: “A competenti auctoritate ecclesiastica territoriali, de qua in art. 22 §2, expedit ut instituaturs Commissio liturgica, a viris in scientia liturgica, Musica, Arte sacra ac re pastoralis peritis iuvanda.”

³⁹ Jungmann, 29.

⁴⁰ Perhaps one reason for this “omission” was the mentality of Monsignor Parniés I. Anglés, the relator of the preparatory subcommission on sacred music. See Bugnini, 21–22.

⁴¹ See *Acta Synodalia*, I, pars II, 686.

C. Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art in the Post-Conciliar Church

Even before the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Blessed Pope Paul VI was looking to its implementation. Prominent in two early post-conciliar documents from the Holy See were diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art. Other, later ecclesiastical interventions—both universal and particular—continued to promote these commissions as important vehicles for the renewal of the liturgical apostolate.

1. The Motu Proprio *Sacram liturgiam*

Some six weeks after promulgating *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Pope Paul promulgated the motu proprio *Sacram liturgiam* to enumerate those provisions of the liturgy constitution that would take effect at the conclusion of the *vacatio legis*.⁴² Among those provisions was the following:

In keeping with the norms of art. 45 and 46, in all dioceses there is to be a commission that is entrusted, under the bishop's direction, with the duty of increasing the knowledge and furthering the progress of the liturgy.

In this matter it may be advantageous for several dioceses to have a joint commission.

Each diocese should also, as far as possible, have two other commissions, one for music, the other for art.

In some dioceses it will often be advisable to merge the three commissions into one.⁴³

This portion of the official text of the motu proprio, which appeared in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, corrected three editorial errors in the text originally published in *L'Osservatore Romano* on January 29, 1964. Inasmuch as others have written on these emendations and the related controversy,⁴⁴ we can focus on the one development concerning diocesan commissions in the document.

⁴² Paul VI, Motu proprio *Sacram liturgiam*, January 25, 1964: AAS 56 (1964) 139–144.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2; AAS 56 (1964) 141: “Decernimus pariter ut, ex praescriptis art. 45 et 46, in singulis dioecibus Consilium habeatur, cui sit mandatum, ut, Episcopo moderante, res liturgica magis magisque pernoscat et provehatur.

“Qua super re opportune aliquando fiet, ut plures dioeceses commune habeant Consilium.

“Praeterea in quavis dioecesi, quantum fieri potest, duo alia habeantur Consilia: alterum Musicae sacrae, alterum Arti sacrae accurandae.

“Quae tria Consilia in singula dioecesi non raro congruet, ut in unum coalescant.” Translation from *DOL*, 280.

⁴⁴ See Bugnini, 58–59 and Reiner Kaczynski, “Toward the Reform of the Liturgy,” in *The History of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, English ed. Joseph Komonchak (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000) 3: 252–256.

In affirming that the liturgical commission's work is moderated by the bishop, the pope further explained the purpose of diocesan commissions for liturgy. Whereas *Sacrosanctum Concilium* said that liturgical commissions were charged with "promoting the liturgical apostolate," *Sacram liturgiam* described this promotion in terms of the "duty of increasing the knowledge and furthering the progress of the liturgy." In other words, education and liturgical renewal are the chief functions of diocesan commissions for liturgy.

2. The Post-Conciliar Interventions

The liturgical reforms mandated by the Second Vatican Council were entrusted by Paul VI to the Consilium, which was tasked to work with the Congregation of Rites. Two instructions prepared by the Consilium and issued by the congregation gave attention to commissions for liturgy and music. A 1971 circular letter from the Congregation for the Clergy spoke to art commissions.

a. The Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*

The most detailed description of the liturgical commission's role and function is found in the first instruction issued September 26, 1964. *Inter Oecumenici* stated the following about diocesan liturgical commissions:

47. The diocesan liturgical commission, under the direction of the bishop, has these responsibilities:
- a. to be fully informed on the state of pastoral-liturgical activity in the diocese;
 - b. to carry out faithfully those proposals in liturgical matters made by the competent authority and to keep informed on the studies and programs taking place elsewhere in this field;
 - c. to suggest and promote practical programs of every kind that may contribute to the advancement of liturgical life, especially in the interest of aiding priests laboring in the Lord's vineyard;
 - d. to suggest, in individual cases or even for the whole diocese, timely, step-by-step measures for the work of pastoral liturgy, to appoint and to call upon people capable of helping priests in this matter as occasion arises, to propose suitable means and resources;
 - e. to see to it that programs in the diocese designed to promote liturgy go forward with the cooperation and mutual help of other groups along the lines mentioned above (no. 45 e) regarding the liturgical commission of the assembly of bishops.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, September 26, 1964: AAS 56 (1964) 887: "47. Commissionis liturgicae dioeclesanae, moderante Episcopo, est:

"a) statum actionis pastoralis liturgicae in dioecesi cognoscere;

"b) accurate persequi ea quae iu re liturgica a competenti auctoritate proposita sunt, necnon perspecta habere studia et incepta quae alibi in hoc campo fiunt;

"c) incepta practica omnis generis, quae ad rem liturgicam provehendam conferre possint, suggerere et promovere, praesertim ad sacerdotes iam in vinea Domini operantes adiuvandos quod spectat;

Two series of comments are in order concerning the instruction's norms. First, as has been seen before, the commission's activity is moderated by the bishop. Indeed, the five responsibilities delineated in the instruction are the bishop's responsibility as the first liturgist of his diocese. In practice, however, they are given to the liturgical commission for execution, though always under the bishop's direction. Furthermore, the responsibilities given to the commission support the bishop's tripartite liturgical role as moderator, promoter, and guardian of liturgical life in his diocese.⁴⁶ The instruction also emphasizes the diocesan commission's ongoing working relationships with the priests of the diocese (47 c and d) and the national liturgical commission (47e)

Second, the educational and reform functions of the liturgical commission articulated in *Sacram liturgiam* are more fully defined in the instruction. The gathering of information—not only concerning diocesan activities (47a) but also in the field of liturgical studies (47b)—is essential if the commission is to fulfill its executory function. While initiative is welcomed in this regard (47c), the instruction indicates that the liturgical commission has, as a chief responsibility, the task “to carry out faithfully those proposals in liturgical matters made by competent authority,” whether it be the diocesan bishop, the conference of bishops, or the Apostolic See. In this regard, the commission's role of vigilance is not focused on eliminating abuses, as was promoted in *Mediator Dei*, but in seeing that the liturgical reforms are properly implemented in the particular church (47e).

b. The Instruction *Musicam sacram*

Because there was no section on music in *Inter Oecumenici*, a separate instruction on sacred music was planned by the Consilium.⁴⁷ That instruction, entitled *Musicam sacram* and not issued until March 5, 1967, concludes with the topic of diocesan commissions for music.

68. Diocesan music commissions make an important contribution to the promotion of sacred music as part of the program of pastoral liturgy in the diocese.

As far as possible, therefore, every diocese is to have such a commission to work in close conjunction with the diocesan liturgical commission.

For greater efficiency it will be better in most cases to combine the two commissions into one, made up of experts in each field.

It is also strongly recommended that, when it is considered helpful, several

“d) in singulis casibus, aut etiam pro universa dioecesi, suggerere opportunos et progressivos ordines laboris pastoralis liturgici; idoneos viros, qui in hac re sacerdotes, data occasione, iuvare possint, indicare aut etiam vocare, et apta instrumenta atque subsidia proponere;

“e) curare ut in dioecesi incepta ad rem liturgicam provehendam concordi animo et mutuo adiutorio cum aliis sodalitatibus progrediantur, similii quadam ratione ei quae de Commissione penes coetum Episcoporum instituta dicta est (n. 45 e).” Translation from *DOL*, no. 339.

⁴⁶ See Vatican Council II, Decree *Christus Dominus*, October 28, 1965, 15: AAS 58 (1966) 679–680.

⁴⁷ Bugnini, 898–899.

dioceses establish a single commission to carry out a unified program in an entire region through a coordinated use of resources.⁴⁸

While the instruction broke no new ground with regard to music commissions, one should note the lack of clarity in the instruction's call for a single regional commission. Does *Musicam sacram* call for a regional commission (as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 45 suggests), or is a separate interdiocesan music commission suggested? Either interpretation is possible. Finally, mention should be made of the injunction in article 69 of the instruction given to national liturgical commissions, which are to include experts in music, "to establish contacts not only with the diocesan commissions but also with other associations of the region that are involved with sacred music."⁴⁹

c. The 1971 Circular Letter *Opera artis*

On April 11, 1971, the Congregation for Clergy issued the circular letter *Opera artis* to remind bishops of the importance of the intervention of diocesan commissions for liturgy and art in approving church building and renovation projects.

4. Mindful of the legislation of Vatican Council II and of the directives in the documents of the Holy See, bishops are to exercise unfailing vigilance to ensure that the remodeling of places of worship by reason of the reform of the liturgy is carried out with the utmost caution. Any alterations must always be in keeping with the norms of the liturgical reform and may never proceed without the approval of the commissions on sacred art, on liturgy, and, when applicable, on music, or without prior consultation with experts. The civil laws of the various countries protecting valuable works of art are also to be taken into account.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction *Musicam sacram*, March 5, 1967: AAS 60 (1967) 319: "68. Commissiones dioecesanæ de musica sacra opem ferunt magni ponderis ad musicam sacram una cum actione liturgica pastorali in dioecesi promovendam.

"Proinde in quavis dioecesi, quantum expedit, habeantur, et consociatis viribus una cum Commissione sacrae Liturgiae dent operam.

"Immo saepius congruum erit ut ambae Commissiones in unam coalescant, ex personis in utraque disciplina peritis constantem; ita ut res facilius promoveatur.

"Valde autem commendatur ut, ubi utilius visum fuerit, plures dioeceses unicam constituent Commissionem, quae aequalem agendi rationem in una eademque regione efficiat et vires fructuosius in unum colligat." Translation from *DOL*, 4189.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 320: "Expedit vero ut huiusmodi Commissio non solum cum Commissionibus dioecesanis, sed etiam cum aliis sodalitatibus quae de re musica in eadem regione curant, consilia conferat." Translation from *DOL*, 4190.

⁵⁰ Congregation for Clergy, Circular letter *Opera artis*, April 11, 1971: AAS 63 (1971) 315-317: "Episcopi, memores dispositionum Concilii Vaticani II et illarum, quae circa hanc materiam in documentis Sanctae Sedis continentur, indesinenter vigilent ut mutationes in locis sacris inducendae, reformationis liturgicae occasione, omni cautela fiant, et semper iuxta normas instaurationis liturgicae, neque ipsas ad effectum adducant absque voto Commissionum de Artis Sacra, de Sacra Liturgia, ac, si opus sit, de Musica

The circular letter was issued just after the publication of the revised Roman Missal and its General Instruction. Its intent was to highlight the requirement found in the new General Instruction that local ordinaries were “to use the counsel and help of this commission whenever it comes to laying down norms on this matter, approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important issues.”⁵¹

3. Diocesan Commissions in the United States

Before completing this historical review of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art, it is appropriate to recall our own American experience of these commissions.

a. Establishment of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

When the bishops of the United States established the Bishops’ Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate in November 1958, a poll indicated that only nineteen of 132 dioceses in the United States had liturgical commissions.⁵² One year later, at least thirty-five more dioceses had established liturgical commissions.⁵³ In his 1960 report to the U.S. bishops on the liturgical apostolate, Archbishop John Dearden encouraged his brother bishops to establish liturgical commissions, saying: “Actually the Commission represents the most effective instrument through which a Bishop can hope to exercise the regulation and supervision that are his responsibility.”⁵⁴

As more dioceses established commissions for liturgy, music, and art, interest developed in collaboration among these commissions.⁵⁵ In the years immediately following the conclusion

Sacra et absque consilio virorum peritorum. Praeterea ratio etiam habeatur legum, quae in variis Nationibus fortasse a civilibus auctoritatibus statutae sint ad praestantiora artis monumenta tutanda.” Translation from *DOL*, 4331.

⁵¹ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, editio typica altera, in *Missale Romanum, ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum*, editio typica altera (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975) 74–75: “256. Ad sacras aedes recta exstruendas, reficiendas atque disponendas, omnes quorum interest Commissionem diœcesanam de sacra Liturgia et de Arte sacra consulant. Ordinarius autem loci eiusdem Commissionis consilio et adiutorio utatur, quando agitur de normis in hac re tradendis, aut de novarum aedium adumbrationibus approbandis aut de quibusdam quæstionibus nonnullius momenti diiudicandis.” Translation from *DOL*, 1646. Note that article 256 was not changed from the 1969 *editio typica* in the second edition.

⁵² Bishops’ Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, “Annual Report,” November 1959 (Archives of the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC) 2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁴ John Dearden, “Report on the Liturgical Apostolate,” *Minutes of the Forty-Second Annual Meeting of the Bishops of the United States*, November 1960 (Archives of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC) 52.

⁵⁵ See John P. Cody, “Diocesan Commission of the Liturgical Apostolate: Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph,” *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual North American Liturgical Week* (Washington, DC: The Liturgical Conference, 1961) 219: “Is it out of order to suggest that there is a need for

of the Second Vatican Council, the Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate took the lead in facilitating the desired collaboration among diocesan commissions. An informal 1966 meeting of liturgical commission chairs and secretaries in Houston, Texas, sponsored by the Bishops' Commission,⁵⁶ led to a week-long liturgical institute for members of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art at the University of Notre Dame the following year.⁵⁷

At a 1968 meeting of diocesan liturgy and music commission members gathered in Chicago to study the place of music in the Eucharistic celebration,

a resolution was passed by those present recommending that an advisory committee be established by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy from the diocesan liturgical commissions, with representatives to be elected on a provincial or regional basis by the chairmen and secretaries of the commissions.⁵⁸

The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy took up the proposal of the liturgical commission representatives to establish such an advisory committee at its February 1969 meeting. The BCL

agreed that the group would be urged to exchange information and to improve communications among commissions, as well as to sponsor regional meetings. It was further agreed that, if the federation has the need for an executive secretary, coordinator, or field representative, he should be directly responsible to the Bishops' Committee but his expenses would have to be assumed by the organization.⁵⁹

Following this meeting, the BCL secretariat conducted an election among the diocesan chairs and secretaries for two representatives per episcopal region. These twenty-four people, who met during the 1969 national meeting of diocesan liturgical commissions in Pittsburgh, became the charter members of the board of directors of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC). In January, 1970 in El Paso, Texas the FDLC was officially established and a constitution and bylaws were adopted.⁶⁰

Among its first actions adopted at the El Paso meeting, the FDLC recommended to the BCL "that each diocese have a full-time and competently trained individual for the diocesan

collaboration between Diocesan Commissions? At the Liturgical Week held one year ago in Pittsburgh, this question was raised, and members of Diocesan Commissions, in their own sessions, discussed this idea at length. One hopes to hear more of this in the future."

⁵⁶ Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, *Newsletter 2* (October 1966), in Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter 1965–2000* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004) 58.

⁵⁷ Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Newsletter 4* (November 1968), in *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter*, 156.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁵⁹ Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, "Minutes," February 8–9, 1969 (Archives of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC) 2.

⁶⁰ Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, "History of the FDLC Constitution and Bylaws," in the *FDLC Constitution and Bylaws* (Washington, DC: Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 1991) Appendix 1–B.

liturgical commission.”⁶¹ Fearful that a formal action on this recommendation might not be favorably received by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy did not pursue the proposal, hoping that “the goal could be achieved in some other way.”⁶²

b. U.S. Documents on Diocesan Commissions

In addition to the establishment of the FDLC, 1970 also marked the year in which the BCL published the first of two documents on liturgical commissions. In thirty pages, *The Diocesan Liturgical Commission* examined the functions of liturgical commissions, a survey of commissions, and projects of some liturgical commissions. Sample commission bylaws were also included. Of particular interest for this study is the twofold function outlined for liturgical commissions. Grounded in the conciliar and post conciliar documents mentioned earlier, diocesan commissions for liturgy were discussed under their advisory and education functions.

Rooting the commission’s advisory function in its complete dependence on the diocesan bishop,⁶³

a representative liturgical commission can assist the bishop immeasurably in his task as leader of worship for the diocese. That body may advise the bishop about the needs of his flock, their reactions to the latest reforms, further steps to be undertaken so all the faithful will be led to full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy. Whether this is a matter of the development of broad diocesan liturgical programs, specific questions left to the bishop's decision, or the setting of liturgical policy, the advisory role of the diocesan liturgical commission is paramount.⁶⁴

In addition, the liturgical commission can advise the bishop on proposals coming before the conference of bishops and assist in adapting rites to local custom. Diocesan commissions can also offer advice directly to the BCL or through the FDLC.⁶⁵

Speaking to the educational role of the liturgical commission, the document first urged diocesan commissions to keep themselves informed about developments in the field of liturgy, including the concern for their own spiritual growth: “The diocesan commission itself needs to grow in age, wisdom and grace, in liturgical knowledge and personal holiness if it hopes to

⁶¹ Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, “Minutes,” September 13, 1970 (Archives of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC) 5.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ See Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy (Secretariat), *The Diocesan Liturgical Commission: Documentation, Proposed Goals, and Present Projects* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1970) 7.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 9. Regarding this coordinating role of the FDLC, see Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, *Newsletter* 5 (May 1969), in *Thirty-Five Years of the BCL Newsletter*, 181, where the hope is expressed “that the federation might be able to present informal proposals to the Bishops’ Committee and to be a source of information for the Committee.”

exercise a lasting influence upon people of the diocese.”⁶⁶ The BCL text noted that liturgical commissions not only provide formation for the clergy, religious, and parish worship teams but also are charged with organizing general liturgical catechesis for the people of the diocese.⁶⁷

In commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops gave its clear support to liturgical commissions and offices for worship in the 1983 pastoral statement *The Church at Prayer: A Holy Temple of the Lord*: “The diocesan liturgical commission or office of worship must assist the bishop in carrying out his functions as promoter and guardian of the liturgical life of the diocese.”⁶⁸

Five years later, the secretariat of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy published an updated and revised version of the 1970 monograph on diocesan liturgical commissions. *Promoting Liturgical Renewal: Guidelines for Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and Offices of Worship* not only reflects the increase in offices for worship but focuses on the importance of some diocesan structure—whether commissions and/or offices—for “promoting and enhancing the celebration of the liturgy.”⁶⁹ The role of this liturgical structure is rooted in the bishop’s roles as president of the assembly; moderator, promoter, and custodian of his diocese’s liturgical life; and member of the episcopal college.⁷⁰ While omitting much of the in-depth discussion on commission roles included in the 1970 document, *Promoting Liturgical Renewal* highlights the need for collaboration not solely among other diocesan commissions or offices but among the various departments and organizations within the diocese.

A stable diocesan structure offers the local Church a visible and accessible resource in liturgical matters. Often this results in cooperative efforts with other diocesan offices and agencies, which can result in significant contributions to the life of the diocese. Furthermore, such a liaison eliminates conflicting directives. Obvious examples are liaisons with religious education, adult education, diaconate formation, and so forth. Such a permanent liturgical presence also makes it possible for the diocese to respond in an informed, well-defined, and accessible way to persons having a liturgical concern or question.⁷¹

Since its establishment in 1958 as the Bishops’ Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate, the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy has been and continues to be a constant supporter of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art in the United States. This support and the continued work of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions will be crucial in the coming years as

⁶⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 13–18.

⁶⁸ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Church at Prayer: A Holy Temple of the Lord* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1984) n. 51.

⁶⁹ Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy (Secretariat), *Promoting Liturgical Renewal: Guidelines for Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and Offices of Worship* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1988) 1.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4–7, and 10.

⁷¹ Ibid., 13.

dioceses meet the challenge to reenergize or restructure their liturgical commissions and offices for worship in the face of budget pressures and naysayers.

Part II: Diocesan Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art in the Present

Unlike other juridic institutes in the Church, diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art do not find, in our day, frequent reference in ecclesiastical documents. This is not to say that these consultative groups have lost their utility or even their mandate. On the contrary, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 45 and 46, approved overwhelmingly by the fathers of the Second Vatican Council and promulgated by Blessed Paul VI, retain their full juridic force: “every diocese is to have a commission on the liturgy, under the direction of the bishop, for promoting the liturgical apostolate” and “every diocese, as far as possible, is to have commissions for music and art” (SC 45 and 46). These prescriptions of the supreme authority of the Church have never been abrogated. Whether implicitly or explicitly, universal ecclesiastical law continues to support and promote these diocesan commissions.

A. Diocesan Commissions in the 1983 Code of Canon Law

Despite the attempts of Cardinal Carlo Colombo during the revision process of the 1917 code,⁷² the Code of Canon Law, promulgated by Pope St. John Paul II in 1983, does not mention diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, or art. This is not to say, however, that these commissions are not referenced implicitly in three canons.

Canon 1063 obliges pastors of souls to see that their ecclesiastical communities offer the Christian faithful assistance for the “fruitful liturgical celebration of marriage which is to show that the spouses signify and share in the mystery of the unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church.”⁷³ Canon 1064 then states: “It is for the local ordinary to take care that such assistance is organized fittingly, after he has also heard men and women proven by experience and expertise if it seems opportune.” Canon 1189 concerns the restoration of sacred images.

If they are in need of repair, precious images, that is, those distinguished by age, art, or veneration, which are exhibited in churches or oratories for the reverence of the faithful are never to be restored without the written permission of the ordinary; he is to consult experts before he grants permission.

Finally, in the chapter on churches, canon 1216 states: “In the building and repair of churches,

⁷² Pontificia Commissio Codici Iuris Canonici Recognoscendo, *Relatio Complectens Synthesim Animadversionem ab E.mis atque Exc.mis Patribus Commissionis ad Novissimum Schema Codicis Iuris Canonici Exhibitarum, cum Responsionibus a Secretaria et Consultoribus datis* (Città del Vaticano: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1981) 272.

⁷³ *Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition: New English Translation* (Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1998) c. 1063, 4°. Hereafter, the English translation of the canons of the Latin code will come from this source.

the principles and norms of the liturgy and of sacred art are to be observed, after the advice of experts has been taken into account.”

What these three canons have in common is the injunction to the competent authority to consult with experts before acting. While the diocesan commission for liturgy or art is not mentioned explicitly, the diocesan bishop need look no further for liturgical experts than his own liturgical and art commissions.

B. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*

The experts to whom canon 1216 refers in the building and repair of churches are specified precisely in the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (IGMR).⁷⁴ Situated in Chapter V “The Arrangement and Furnishings of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist,” article 291 in the third edition of the *Institutio* states:

For the proper construction, restoration, and arrangement of sacred buildings, all those involved should consult the diocesan commission for the Sacred Liturgy and sacred art. Moreover, the Diocesan Bishop should employ the counsel and help of this commission whenever it comes to laying down norms on this matter, approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important matters.⁷⁵

The present norm has made only one change from that found in the first and second typical editions of the *Institutio* and that concerns the ecclesiastical office directed to seek the commission’s counsel and assistance.⁷⁶ Whereas article 256 in the 1969, 1970, and 1975 editions of the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* named the local ordinary as the one “to use the counsel and help of this commission,”⁷⁷ the 2002 *Institutio* states that the diocesan bishop is now

⁷⁴ *Missale Romanum, ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum*, editio typica tertia (Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 2002).

⁷⁵ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, editio typica tertia, 291, in *Missale Romanum*, 77–78. English translation from General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 291, in *The Roman Missal, Renewed by Decree of the Most Holy Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Promulgated by Authority of Pope Paul VI and Revised at the Direction of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011) 67.

⁷⁶ One change was made from the 1968 Schema to the 1969 *editio typica* of the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*. Number 258 of the Schema concluded with the phrase “de quibusdam solutionibus alicuius momenti diiudicandis” (*Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, 258, in *Schema n. 301, De Missali* 52 [1968], in Maurizio Barba, *Instituto Generalis Missalis Romani: Textus, Synopsis, Variationes*, Monumenta Studia Instrumenta Liturgica 45 [Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006] 295). Number 256 of the 1969 typical edition, on the other hand, changed the last phrase to read: “de quibusdam quaestionibus nonnullius momenti diiudicandis” (*Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani, editio typica*, 256, in *Missale Romanum, ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum*, Ordo Missae, editio typica 1969 (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1969) 60–61.

⁷⁷ *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, editio typica altera, 256, in *Missale Romanum, ex decreto*

the competent authority in this matter. Juridically this means that vicars general and episcopal vicars cannot receive the counsel and assistance of this commission without a mandate from the diocesan bishop.⁷⁸

Article 291, as well as many of the other norms contained in the *General Instruction*, summarizes previous legislation.⁷⁹ This liturgical norm, however, expands the role of the diocesan commissions (or commission⁸⁰) on liturgy and art. Indeed, these commissions have a twofold focus.

First, diocesan commissions for liturgy and art serve as resources for those involved in the “proper construction, restoration, and arrangement of sacred buildings.” In dioceses where the liturgy and art commissions are separate entities, presumably a protocol will be developed whereby the process will be detailed for those involved in the construction or renovation of churches. When both commissions are to be consulted (as, indeed, they should be), is consultation with the art commission needed before going to the liturgical commission? A diocesan process that answers this and other questions will greatly assist those involved in such projects.

Furthermore, article 291 simply enjoins consultation on “all who are involved” in a construction or renovation project. Surely a non-taxative list of persons to be included in such a consultation with the diocesan commissions would include parish clergy, liturgists, musicians, parishioners, architects, engineers (sound, lighting, et al.), and liturgical design consultants. Other persons or groups could be added to this list. Nevertheless, each has an interest in the outcome of the project; therefore, each has a right to be informed through the consultation of the diocesan commission.

The second focus of the diocesan commissions for liturgy and art is the relationship with the diocesan bishop. This relationship is itself two-pronged. First, the diocesan bishop relies on the liturgy and art commissions for their counsel in “laying down norms” on the construction and renovation of churches. Second, the diocesan bishop relies on the commissions’ counsel in “approving plans for new buildings, and making decisions on the more important matters.” When the commissions’ input is sought for the crafting of diocesan norms, the commissions can provide helpful counsel to those involved in the building and renovation of churches, which, in turn, ought to make the subsequent approval process free of surprises for everyone involved.

C. Diocesan Commissions Elsewhere in the *Ius Vigens*

The last twenty-five years have seen two instructions issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments that reference the diocesan liturgical commission and its work.⁸¹

Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum, editio typica altera (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975) 75. Translation from *DOL*, 1646.

⁷⁸ See 1983 code, c. 134 §3.

⁷⁹ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 126 and *Inter Oecumenici* 91 are cited as the sources of *IGMR* 291.

⁸⁰ The *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* speaks of only one commission for liturgy and art. In the discussion of article 291, it is presumed that dioceses have separate commissions for liturgy and art.

⁸¹ The instruction *Varietates legitimae*, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the

1. The 2001 instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* three times references diocesan liturgical commissions. First, in clarifying that the composition of new liturgical texts does not belong to the competence of mixed commissions, the instruction states: “it is strictly the task of the local and national liturgical commissions” to compose “new texts of prayers or rubrics” in the vernacular “for the purpose of meeting a particular cultural or pastoral need.”⁸² Second, diocesan commissions—as well as the national liturgical commission and other experts—are also mentioned as collaborating with the conference of bishops in preparing “for the publication of a directory or repertory of texts intended for liturgical singing.”⁸³ And finally, the translation of approved diocesan liturgical propers falls to the diocesan liturgical commission or another group designated by the bishop for this task.⁸⁴

2. A practice has developed in the last quarter century whereby documents that mention the multi-faceted liturgical office of the diocesan bishop also reference diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art as a privileged means for the bishop to bring his “task to a successful conclusion.”⁸⁵ The 2004 instruction *Redemptionis sacramentum* devotes one of its seven articles on the diocesan bishop’s exercise of the *munus sanctificandi* to these commissions.⁸⁶

Part III: Preparing for the Future of Diocesan Commissions for Liturgy, Music, and Art

We have devoted considerable time examining the development of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art since 1903 and the current law for their establishment and use. At the same time, we gather at this forty-sixth annual meeting of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions well aware of the challenges we face not only in our own particular churches but also in our regions and across the country when it comes to implementing the conciliar mandate and *ius vigens* for these commissions. A pessimist would ask the question: Is there a future for diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art? Yet we—to whom God has given “a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” (1 Peter 1:3)—take this as a moment to look to the future of diocesan commissions. I conclude with three thoughts for consideration in preparing for what lies ahead.

Discipline of the Sacraments on January 25, 1994, mentions regional liturgical commissions in the section outlining the procedure for more profound adaptations to the liturgy (see n. 65; AAS 87 [1995] 312).

⁸² Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, March 28, 2001, 107: AAS 93 (2001) 718–719. English translation in *Origins* 31 (May 24, 2001) 29.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, n. 108 (*Origins*, 29).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 126 (*Origins*, 30).

⁸⁵ John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, December 4, 1983, 21: AAS 81 (1989) 917. See also Congregation for Bishops, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops Apostolorum successores* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004) n. 145.

⁸⁶ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*. March 25, 2004, 25: AAS 96 (2004) 557.

1. It is one thing for the members of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions to acknowledge, understand, and support the mandate of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 45–46 that every diocese is to have a liturgical commission and, so far as possible, commissions for music and art—all under the direction of the diocesan bishop. It is up to diocesan bishops, however, to establish and seek the advice of these commissions in the particular churches entrusted to their pastoral care.

The very existence of the FDLC as a forum for those working in the liturgical apostolate at the diocesan level will—in the future as it has done for the past forty-five years—be a resource for diocesan liturgical leaders. During my own tenure first as chairman of the liturgical commission and then as director of the Office for Worship in the Diocese of Stockton, I appreciated the resources provided by the FDLC to support my ministry to the two bishops I served. This national meeting and the regional meetings provide not only an opportunity for continuing education for professional liturgists but perhaps more importantly an occasion to network with colleagues from across the country. While less true today than in the past, principally because of the growth of social media and instant communications, diocesan leaders can become isolated from their counterparts in other dioceses and the ideas and support they can offer one another in their work.

We are well aware of the turnover of liturgical personnel in our regions and across the country. The bishops who returned from the Second Vatican Council to establish liturgical commissions and open worship offices by the dozens fifty years ago have gone to their eternal reward. Their successors today may be unaware of the conciliar mandate and the great assistance commissions and offices can provide in the exercise of their own sanctifying office (c. 835 §1). Similarly, the clerics and lay faithful who serve as members of diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art and who staff worship offices have changed over the years. This turnover in personnel in the diocesan liturgical apostolate is an opportunity for the FDLC to participate in the New Evangelization by introducing bishops and their closest liturgical collaborators to the vision of the conciliar fathers and the support the Federation can provide them.

Twenty years ago, sixty-five percent of U.S. dioceses had a liturgical commission, while seventy-eight percent had a worship office.⁸⁷ Of 135 responding dioceses in a 2015 survey, fifty-five percent have commissions, but eighty-eight percent have offices.⁸⁸ These numbers prompt us to take a serious look at the vitality of our liturgical commissions and worship offices. Look to those dioceses that have thriving commissions for liturgy, music, and art. What vivifies them? Put together a list of best practices to share not only what other dioceses have found helpful but what bishops, commissions, and offices can do to form and support the liturgical prayer in their particular churches.

Where commissions or offices do not exist, an effort ought to be made to learn the reason why. First, it is unlikely that the diocesan bishop is personally preparing all the diocesan liturgies, responding to the myriad of liturgical questions that find their way to the pastoral center every

⁸⁷ Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, “Worship Offices and Commissions in the United States,” June 6, 1995 (Washington, DC: Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 1995) 13.

⁸⁸ Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, “Offices and Commissions: Results of Survey Based on 125 Responses,” September 21, 2015 (Unpublished).

week, or organizing the formation of lectors and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Rather, it is likely that the bishop relies by necessity on clerics and lay faithful to handle these important tasks. If so, then perhaps the bishop can be persuaded to organize them formally into a commission or office. Second, when looking to the reason why a commission or office does not exist in a diocese—especially when these institutes did exist at one time—it is important to get to the reason why each was disbanded. It is not uncommon to mistake issues of personality for those of structure. In a difference of opinion or personality conflict between a bishop and the worship office director or members of the liturgical commission,

the conclusion is sometimes drawn that the structure—and not personalities—is the problem. The result can be that the office is closed or the commission disbanded because the structure did not work.⁸⁹

What is needed instead is a careful (and honest) assessment of the situation to discern if the problem lies in the structure or in the personnel staffing the institutes. Perhaps the FDLC might consider offering as a service to interested diocesan bishops an assessment of the local diocesan liturgical structure. At the invitation of the bishop, the FDLC would send a team of two or three experienced worship office directors and/or commissions chairs to the diocese to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current liturgical institutes and offer suggestions for improvement. The confidential report of the team would be provided only to the diocesan bishop for use as he sees fit.

Inasmuch as the eternal praise of the Father to which Jesus the Lord joins the Church to himself is part of the deposit of faith and divine revelation, the FDLC participates in the New Evangelization by promoting and supporting diocesan structures that build up the liturgical life in the particular churches in the United States.

2. In a 1993 article in the *FDLC Newsletter*, Father Ron Lewinski observed that one reason for the decrease in the number of commissions and worship offices in U.S. dioceses was a belief on the part of some bishops that the liturgical reform—specifically the reform of the rites—was completed.⁹⁰ It was not true in 1993, and it is not true now.

The recent experience of implementing the third edition of the *Roman Missal* manifested the need for and utility of liturgical commissions and worship offices. In dioceses across the country, commissions and offices hosted workshops for priests, deacons, and lay liturgical ministers not only to introduce the new Missal but, in many cases, to present the liturgical catechesis first mandated for the Christian faithful in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 19. Not surprisingly, the FDLC played an important role in this national effort of liturgical formation, assisting dioceses with many types of resources. Those dioceses in which active commissions and offices exist were able to assist the diocesan bishop in his promotional function in a prepared and organized way.

While the implementation of the third edition of the *Roman Missal* took much time and money at both the national and diocesan levels, other revised liturgical books will have to be

⁸⁹ Foster, *Liturgical Commissions and Offices: A Resource Book*, 2001) 84.

⁹⁰ Ron Lewinski, “Why a Diocesan Liturgy Office?” *FDLC Newsletter* 20:4 (1993) 26.

implemented in the future. A new English translation of the Rite of Confirmation will afford dioceses the opportunity to reflect on this second sacrament of initiation. Similarly, the publication of the English translation of the 1991 *Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium* will provide countless occasions for catechesis not only on the rite itself but also on the Christian understanding of marriage between a man and a woman as a reflection of God’s perpetual and faithful covenant to humankind. Still further in the future will be the implementation of the *Misal Romano* and the revised translation of the Liturgy of the Hours. Without the expert and careful formation of the clergy and lay faithful led by the diocesan bishop and supported by his commissions and worship office, the implementation of these rites will not bear the fruit they should.

3. I opened by recounting Jesus telling his disciples: “You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house” (Mt 5:14–15). Perhaps one reason for the existential challenges that many diocesan commissions and worship offices face is that few people know they exist and the good work they do and have done behind the scenes. While I am not suggesting our commissions and offices take out full-page ads in the *New York Times* or place thirty-second spots in next year’s Super Bowl telecast, I do think there are ways commissions and offices can let their light shine “to all in the house.”

In the first place, commissions and offices ought to have a functioning and up-to-date section on the diocesan website. It can provide information on the nature and purpose of the liturgical structures in the diocese as well as key personnel and their expertise. Correct and current information on liturgical norms, celebrations, ministries, and issues can be useful. As many dioceses and offices have ceased publishing hard-copy papers and newsletters, others have created periodic e-newsletters to provide timely information to the faithful. Perhaps a Twitter account is possible. A daily or weekly tweet to clerics and lay ministers can offer a systematic liturgical catechesis or reminder of upcoming celebrations and workshops.

Of course, the use of social media is not limited to inside the diocese. Commission members and office personnel should themselves take advantage of using social media to stay in touch with colleagues in other dioceses and remain informed on liturgical developments. The FDLC list serve offers a confidential way for you, as representatives of your respective diocesan bishops, to learn what other dioceses are doing, how they handled a certain issue, or verify that some idea you or your bishop has is not completely *contra legem*.

Conclusion

Commenting on article 291 of the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, Mark Wendig and Richard Vosko state: “The work of the bishop with the diocesan commission in shaping the edifices and art of the diocese embodies the missionary character of the Church, making an indelible mark on that place for years to come.”⁹¹ Truly the building of sacred places embodies

⁹¹ Mark E. Wendig and Richard S. Vosko, “Chapter V: The Arrangement and Furnishings of Churches for the Celebration of the Eucharist,” in *A Commentary on the General Instruction of the Roman*

the missionary character of the Church, but this same missionary character is animated by the expertise and diligent hard work of the diocesan bishop, his presbyterate, and his closest liturgical collaborators in promoting the liturgical apostolate. While many norms decreed in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* have seen development in the last half century, the fundamental liturgical principles articulated in chapter one possess all the vigor today they had when promulgated. Diocesan commissions for liturgy, music, and art, working under the direction of the diocesan bishop, have been and will continue to be an important juridic institute in promoting the liturgical apostolate in the particular church. May the role we play in this work deepen the faith of our brothers and sisters in Christ and give praise to the God of love and mercy.

Missal, ed. Edward Foley, Nathan D. Mitchell, and Joanne M. Pierce (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2007) 356.