

Marier, Ted,
Good Hymns...
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THE
CATHOLIC
HOUR

Good Hymns
For Better Worship

Ted Marier and
Mother Josephine Morgan
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For Better Worship

ANNCR: This is THE CATHOLIC HOUR.

Today, the Catholic Hour continues its special series of five programs on MUSIC IN CATHOLIC WORSHIP. Presented by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company, these broadcasts explore the nature and purpose of Sacred Music and its role in the life of the Church.

In producing this unusual series, the CATHOLIC HOUR has the cooperation of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, in Purchase, New York. All of the music and commentary you will hear was especially recorded for this program during the recently completed summer sessions at Pius X School. The student body, consisting of priests, sisters and laymen from all parts of North America, devoted their time to preparing these musical presentations as their contribution to the CATHOLIC HOUR'S mission of communicating the treasures of the Universal Church to the American public.

In these programs, the CATHOLIC HOUR departs from its customary uninterrupted talks to present studies in word and music which will demonstrate the importance and beauty of "Music in Catholic Worship". Today's broadcast is entitled "Good Hymns for Better Worship". Your host will be Mother Josephine Morgan, of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, director of the Pius X School.

Mother Morgan.

MOTHER MORGAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thus far in our discussions of sacred music, we have explored the simple beauty of Gregorian Chant and the magnificence of polyphony or part-singing, as they are used in the worship of the Church. Today we turn to a new subject: hymns, or to be specific, English hymns. Certainly these are important features of our processions, Holy Hours, novenas, and other religious services. So this afternoon we're going to try to find out just what a hymn is, — what makes a good hymn, and why and how they are used. We'll also sing examples of various kinds of hymns for you.

Now, exactly what can the Pius X School of Liturgical Music contribute to the interest in good English hymns? Here is need felt in every parish, school and convent throughout the Church year.

It was this very difficulty finding appropriate hymns, which led our School to compile a hymnal which bears the name of Pius X, promotor of reform in liturgical music.

The hymns you will hear are from this publication. To guide us through this presentation, I'd like to introduce a member of our faculty who, incidentally, is editor-in-chief of McLaughlin and Riley, publishers of the Pius X hymnal, Mr. Theodore Marier.

Mr. Marier.

MARIER: Thank you, Mother. I'm glad that you emphasized the fact that we are going to present "good" English hymns this afternoon. For just as there is good and bad music in let's say the "popular" field, there are good and bad hymns. And since the music we're concerned with is used in the worship of God, we can only admit of compositions which are really "good" music. As His Holiness, Pope Pius XII has said, "the laws and standards for religious art apply in a stricter and holier way to sacred music because sacred music enters more intimately into divine worship. . . music has an important place in the actual performance of the sacred ceremonies and rites."

Since, therefore, music does have an important role in divine worship, what are the standards proposed by Holy

Mother Church? Referring to hymns, Our Holy Father has said that they "...must be in full conformity with the doctrine of the Catholic faith... They must use plain language and simple melody.... Despite the fact that they are short and easy, they should manifest a religious dignity and seriousness". So we can see that while the Church makes wide use of hymns, She is only interested in good hymns, — good music and good words.

Let's take a few examples. A hymn to Our Blessed Savior which is suitable for use at any season of the year is "Thee, Lord, Of Every Age We Sing". Expressing the deep devotion and proud praise of the faithful, it conforms to the strictest standards of Church music.

Here it is sung by our mixed choir, — "Thee, Lord, of Every Age We Sing."

MUSIC: THEE, LORD, OF EVERY AGE WE SING

MARIER: There we have plain language in conformity with doctrine sung to a dignified melody. It's a "good" hymn.

An important occasion, which comes only once a year in most parishes, is the day of the First Communion of our children. The significance of the occasion seems to indicate a very special musical program, yet one which can be understood by the children. A suitable hymn which

can be used as a processional and again at the end of the ceremony is "Dearest, Lord, I Love Thee". The words are by St. Ignatius, the music by G. Landore.

MUSIC: DEAREST LORD, I LOVE THEE

MARIER: "Dearest Lord, I Love Thee". That illustrates what the Holy Father meant when he said "Hymns serve as a sort of catechism. They bring pure and chaste joy to young people and adults... They give a kind of religious grandeur to their more solemn assemblies and gatherings".

Throughout the liturgical year, we encounter feasts of the Blessed Virgin. She is the object of great devotion on the part of Catholics and we can expect that there would be a demand for hymns in her honor, as indeed there is. One composition that we can recommend to you as fulfilling the requirements of a "good" hymn is "Mary, the Dawn", an anonymous text in the popular litany form, set to music by Paul Cross. Here it is, sung by a mixed chorus, — "Mary, the Dawn".

MUSIC: MARY, THE DAWN

MARIER: Let's listen now to another hymn to Our Blessed Mother which qualifies under the Church's standards. It's "Mary, Pure Light," with text by Edward C. Currie and music by J. Naujalis.

MUSIC: MARY, PURE LIGHT

MARIER: That was "Mary, Pure Light," another example of a hymn which is most acceptable from a doctrinal as well as a musical standpoint. And we must consider hymns from both viewpoints. We don't have a good hymn if we have a great musical composition which soars to heaven bearing pious jibberish. Nor do we have a good hymn if we have a beautifully poetic and doctrinally sound text which limps along on a musical atrocity. We are worshipping God. Our musical prayers must reach His throne with all the beauty and reverence we can give them. In devotions to the Blessed Sacrament, for instance, which are an integral part of parish and school life, we suggest that you might use "Jesus, Food of Angels", which meets all the requirements of the Holy See. It was written by St. Alphonsus and set to music by John E. Ronan. Listen to it now and see if you can catch something of the adoration and gratitude of the world for the wondrous Gift of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. "Jesus, Food of Angels".

MUSIC: JESUS, FOOD OF ANGELS

MARIER: Throughout our country today, there are a great many hymns in popular usage, which, if weighed against the recent statements of the Holy Father, would have to be discarded. It's not

our purpose this afternoon to criticize those hymns, but to encourage our audience to look for music that is truly good. We hope that our examples will lead parish congregations, choirs, and schools to try them out, to gradually introduce these and the many other worthwhile compositions into regular use. Here's a typical hymn which can be easily learned by any congregation. It demonstrates how the simple melodies of the Psalm Tones can be used in English as well as in Latin. Listen now as our choir sings the familiar invocation, "Soul of Christ, Be My Sanctification".

MUSIC: SOUL OF CHRIST, BE MY SANCTIFICATION

MARIER: Another hymn which can be sung by the congregation during parish devotions or on the many feasts of Our Lord is "Be Thou My Vision". It is also an excellent processional hymn, for reasons which will be obvious when you hear it. From "The Breastplate of Saint Patrick", here is "Be Thou My Vision".

MUSIC: BE THOU MY VISION

MARIER: That was "Be Thou My Vision" from "The Breastplate of Saint Patrick". It's the kind of hymn which would be a happy addition to the repertoire of any parish choir or congregation. Most acceptable as a song of worship, it is

also a stirring inspiration to the faithful who sing it.

For our next selection, we've chosen a general purpose hymn, one which simply yet eloquently expresses our love for and dependence upon Christ the Savior. Listen now to "Jesus, My All, My Own".

MUSIC: JESUS, MY ALL, MY OWN

MARIER: From a prayer of petition, we turn for our concluding selection to a prayer of proud praise. Notice how the spirit of the music is adapted to the change in mood. The text is from "The Dream of Gerontius" by Cardinal Newman; the music by Joseph McGrath. Here is "Praise to the Holiest".

MUSIC: PRAISE TO THE HOLIEST

MARIER: Today, we've tried to give you some idea of the importance of good hymns and a few samples of music which is truly appropriate for use in our worship of Christ. If I were to leave one thought with you, it would be this: remember that sacred music is prayer. It should be worthy of what we are trying to do: praise God. Our hymns should be a combination of poetic, reverent text and expressive, dignified music which can resound for us in Heaven as a token of our best art in adoration.

MOTHER MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Marier. This program has accurately demonstrated what we are trying to do

here at Pius X School — promote and encourage the very best traditions of Sacred Music. Next week our students will return to the air for our final broadcast, and it is only fitting that the culmination of our series should be devoted to the highest form of adoration given to man — the Holy Mass. We hope you'll be with us then, Thank you.

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