

Doctoral dissertation summary

“Teachings of the Episcopate of Poland on music in the liturgy based on the 2017 Instruction on Church music against the documents of the Church”

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The dissertation is an analysis of the teaching of the Episcopate of Poland on music, based on documents issued by the Episcopate with particular reference to 2017 Instruction of the Episcopate of Poland on Church music against the teachings of the Holy See as articulated in the available literature on the topic.

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter One presents the Church's acts concerning music since Second Vatican Council. Both Vatican's and Polish documents are discussed. Chapter Two covers the role of music in the Church, including its theological and pastoral references to other arts. Chapter Third, being the central one of the dissertation, focuses on music during the celebration of the Holy Mass. It presents all parties involved in musical actions, and then analyses of the particular rites of the Mass. Chapter Four includes the topic of the liturgical year, celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours and the sacraments, and discusses different types of services. Last chapter encompasses other aspects of the Episcopate of Poland's teachings on music. It discusses problems such as instrumental music, concerts performed in churches, liturgy broadcasting, music education, musical publications, and institutions supporting musical activity in the Polish Church.

Teachings of the Episcopate of Poland on music are deeply rooted in the teachings of the Holy See. Certain problems are discussed in more detail than others. Episcopal teachings take into account the characteristics of the Polish Church with her traditions, customs and cultural background. Amongst the documents issued by the Polish bishops, the 2017 Instruction on Church music holds a special place. Its theological section presents a deeper and more elaborate insight than is generally customary in this type of documents. It covers the issue of all the music that is present in the Polish Church, both in liturgy and outside of it.

Liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, holds a central place in the Church's teaching. The integral part of it is music, which cocreates the holy rites. The music should be of an appropriate nature, corresponding with the holiness of liturgy. Just experiencing music may be a path to a communion with God through beauty. Gregorian chant is the model for Church music. The bishops appeal for a wider use of Gregorian music in Polish parishes. Among the instruments, the pipe organ is the most respected.

Each celebration should be prepared with great diligence. This includes also a thoughtfully constructed repertoire of songs, whose purpose is to create communion among the participants of the liturgy and at the same time to introduce the congregation to the mystery of the day or the particular

rites. The balance between the sung and recited elements of the Mass, as well as appropriately selected melodies, allow to highlight the more crucial moments of a given celebration, and, in a broader scale, more important celebrations in the course of a week or year. Conforming to the liturgical norms is crucial in experiencing liturgy as a celebration of the entire Church.

Teachings of the Episcopate of Poland provide a number of detailed guidelines, some of them concerning the way the music should be performed. The guidelines clarify the form of certain rites, occasionally calling for changes in current practices adopted by some of the parishes. The 2017 Instruction describes all the elements of the Mass which allow for singing or instrumental music. The bishops emphasise the pastoral value of the instrumental music performed both in the right moments of the liturgy and as a means for preparing for a celebration.

The bishops express also a pastoral concern for the Liturgy of the Hours. They recommend that vespers with the participation of the faithful should be celebrated in parish churches every Sunday, and call for a particularly diligent celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours during the Paschal Triduum.

Music is present during the celebration of the sacraments. The bishops analyse the theological importance of each sacrament, postulating appropriately selected songs, and set out further detailed guidelines concerning the performance of music and correcting inappropriate practices.

A church remains a sacred space all the time, also when the liturgy is not celebrated. This rule applies to concerts and other events that may be held in a church. The chancel, and especially the altar and pulpit in it, is a place which should always be particularly respected.

A liturgy which is going to be broadcast in the media should be prepared with an exceptional diligence. The celebration must be exemplary. Apart from faithfully observing all liturgical norms, it is also necessary to take special care so that the celebration would not become a means of promoting any among the participants.

Liturgical and musical formation is another important area of the bishops' concern, since the effectiveness of this kind of education influences the shape of the Church's life not only now, but also in the future. The formation should be received by all the participants of the liturgy, according to their own tasks and office. The guidelines talk about the priests, the serving persons but also all of the faithful. Special attention should be given to the education of Church musicians, i.e. organists, cantors and members of choirs and singing groups.

Proper songbooks, sheet music libraries and recordings provide valuable help in musical activity. The Episcopate encourage creating new compositions as well. The state of music in the dioceses is overseen by the Church Music Commissions and other organisations appointed specially for this purpose.

The Episcopate of Poland's teaching on music is extremely rich and highly detailed. A significant part of it, however, remains only in the sphere of postulates. The diligent implementation of the guidelines, especially in the area of liturgical and musical formation, needs to become a major matter of concern for the Polish Church in the coming years.

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