Missa Gloriæ Patris Reflection and Analysis

Alex Seefeldt

The Title and Theology of Missa Gloriæ Patris

The title Missa Gloriæ Patris is Latin for Mass to the Glory of the Father. The phrase “to the Glory of the Father” can be taken in two ways. The first is to indicate that the Mass is ordered towards the greater glory of God the Father. All of creation is a manifestation of the Father’s glory, because His glory is infinite and infinitely creative. Furthermore, Jesus tells us that we glorify God the Father through the Christian life. John 15:8 says “By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”¹ As a creative work offered in worship, the mass setting is meant to be a fruit of the Christian life, a human contribution to the glory of God.

The second meaning of the phrase “to the Glory of the Father” is based in the idea that Jesus Himself is the Glory of the Father. If we can glorify God in seeking the Christian life, then Jesus, as the ultimate model for all Christians, is the ideal we are striving towards in doing so. Moreover, the imagery of Christ as the splendor or radiance of the Father is given in scripture, as the epistle writer tells us in Hebrews 1:3, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.”² In his commentary on John 1:1, Thomas Aquinas explains that the analogy of the Son as the radiance of the Father is a way of indicating the Son’s coeternity with the Father. This reading is corroborated by Revelation 22:13, in which Christ refers to Himself as “the Alpha and the Omega.” Since He proceeds from the Father before all of time, Christ is the “firstborn of creation” (Col 1:15), meaning that He is the primary and ultimate manifestation of the Father, and therefore is his Glory. This is also why Christ is referred to as the Lógos (John

¹ New American Bible, revised edition.
² New International Version.
1:1), through whom “the heavens were made” (Psalm 33:6). This is glory in the same sense referred to earlier: God’s glory is manifest in all creation, and Christ, as the organizing principle of the universe, is the way in which that is accomplished.

Glory figures strongly as a theme in *Missa Glorae Patris*. I placed special attention on the use of the word *gloria* in the mass text. The word appears three times in the Gloria, and once in the Sanctus. The passages in the Gloria using the word are some of the most energetic and exciting passages of the whole work. When the phrase *gloria tua* occurs in the Sanctus, the music references the music for the phrase *propter magnam gloriam tuam* in the Gloria, adding salience and significance to the concept. Furthermore, throughout the entire piece I attempted to infuse a sort of aspirational aesthetic, reaching towards an effective expression of the glory of God. One of the most important goals in this project for me was to write something that would inspire people to reflect on the unlimited possibilities inherent in the undertaking of liturgical music, and I tried to achieve this by constantly pointing toward the Glory of God in the music, which is the source of my creative inspiration.

**On the Prayer of the Kyrie**

The Kyrie is prayed during the penitential rite of the Mass, which precedes the Liturgy of the Word. Before anything else, the first step of our worship is to “prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries”\(^3\) by asking for God’s mercy. The Church teaches that venial sins are absolved through the penitential rite, which allows those not in a state of mortal sin to worship completely free of sin. In the early planning stages of the mass setting, I sought a narrative structure for the Kyrie that would illustrate this process.

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\(^3\) *The Roman Missal*, 3\(^{rd}\) ed. International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. 2010.
I wound up making great strides in refining this narrative concept when I took a closer look at the etymology of the words *Kyrie* and *Christe*. *Kyrie* is a Latin transliteration of the Greek Κύριος, which comes from the root word κῦρος, which refers to the concept of supremacy or power over another.\(^4\) *Christe* is the transliteration of Χριστός, a Greek calque for the Hebrew מָשִׁיח (mashiakh), meaning “anointed” or, in this case, “the Anointed One.”\(^5\) In both languages, the root word connects to the concept of smearing someone with oil for consecratory purposes.\(^6\)\(^7\)

Both of these words draw on some evocative concepts, so I decided to bring them to bear on the narrative I was imagining. Specifically, I had this idea of the supremacy of God behind a great wall which we are unable to pass ourselves, because our sin separates us from Him. The contrasting idea of *Christe* overcomes sin, breaking down the wall and allowing us to step into the sphere of worship. This is achieved through grace, represented by the oil of anointing.

**Figure 1.** Form diagram of the Kyrie.

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\(^6\) Liddell and Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*.

Form in the Kyrie

The Kyrie follows a nested ternary form, interspersed with less regular organ interludes. The three large-scale sections each set one line of text three times. Although sections return throughout the piece, they never restate the same material verbatim, but instead develop on it. This is true for the subsections as well as the large-scale sections. The piece completes with a coda, which will be paralleled by the coda of the Agnus Dei, drawing a connection between the first and last movements of the work and thus adding to the sense of closure.

The concepts of supremacy and anointing mentioned above are brought out over the course of the song. In the first large-scale section, we stand outside the wall, not yet united with our Lord waiting inside. The music alternates between solemnity and petition, representing our relationship to God as subjects. In the Christe sections, we have imagery of grace and anointing oil. The music has a brighter and more flowing aesthetic. In particular, the texture and harmony of the D section is meant to evoke the smearing of oil, as the harmony drips gradually downward and the longer notes in the choral texture “spread” the organ’s shorter notes. When the Kyrie returns in 3A, the wall has been broken, and the original motive of the A section is transformed to fit the major mode. The B section, originally a cry of supplication, becomes a hymn of wondrous adoration. Finally, the original theme returns for the fourth and final time, this time in the elevated register of B-flat major.

The Kyrie is one of two pieces in Missa Gloriar Patris which ends around a different tonic than it began. The purpose of the discrepancy is to evoke the idea of an irreversible change, namely, the inbreaking of grace and the forgiveness of sin. By the end of the piece, we have entered into a new state of reconciliation, and are therefore prepared to celebrate the Mass.
On the Prayer of the Gloria

With the penitential rite completed, the first thing we do (outside of Lent and Advent) is join the Gloria. When we pray the Gloria, we are joining into the eternal hymn of praise offered to God by the Church. In a way, the hymn is a verbalization of the Church’s work on earth of pointing people towards the Glory of God, so it is prayed nonverbally at all times by the good works of Christians. As the central theme of Missa Gloriae Patris is the Glory of God, the Gloria somewhat serves as the Mass’s centerpiece.

I read three primary functions in the prayer of the Gloria. The first, most obviously, is glorification. This is the main purpose of the hymn, and it is taken up by the first seven and final three lines of the text (i.e., Gloria in excelsis...magnam gloriam tuam and Quoniam tu solus...gloria Dei Patris). In the middle of these passages are the other functions. The second of the three is naming God the Father and God the Son with several titles: Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, all the way up to Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Finally, there is a passage which somewhat imitates the text of the Agnus Dei (qui tollis...dexteram Patris, miserere nobis). The function of this passage, distinct from the other two, is petition or supplication. Note that these functions do not line up with the sentence structure of the Gloria; it smoothly transitions from one type of prayer to the next within the same phrase.
### Figure 2. Form diagram of the Gloria.

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>m. 1</td>
<td>m. 11</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td><em>Gloria in excelsis Deo</em>...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>m. 12</td>
<td>m. 16</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td><em>Laudamus te</em>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>m. 16</td>
<td>m. 25</td>
<td>CM</td>
<td><em>gratias agimus tibi</em>...</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>m. 26</td>
<td>m. 60</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td><em>Domine Deus, Rex cælestis</em>...</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m. 61</td>
<td>m. 78</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td><em>Domine Fili Unigenite</em>...</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m. 79</td>
<td>m. 94</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td><em>Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei</em>...</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>m. 95</td>
<td>m. 107</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td><em>qui tollis peccata</em>...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m. 107</td>
<td>m. 111</td>
<td>FM</td>
<td><em>Quoniam tu solus Sanctus</em>...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>m. 112</td>
<td>m. 124</td>
<td>Fm</td>
<td><em>Jesu Christe, cum Sancto</em>...</td>
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**Form in the Gloria**

Once again referencing narrative structure, the Gloria can be thought of as a story within a story within a story, with each story mapping to one of the functions mentioned above. As the text segues between the functions of the prayer, the scope of the music “narrows,” going from highly expansive in the glorification stage, to more subdued in the naming, to very focused in the supplication. This makes the return to the expansive glorification scope in the last three lines of text feel discontinuous, and therefore highly accentuated.

The text begins with glorification, so the music begins with a mood to match. The “highly expansive” scope I mentioned above is achieved through big, active textures and harmonies. I wanted to convey a sort of exuberance, both exhilarating and appropriate to the solemnity of the Mass. The harmony of the first three sections is striking and varied in approach, and the B and C sections make use of lively rhythmic interests, which will be investigated in the analysis portion of this paper.
The next three sections follow the function of naming. New thematic material is introduced in the D section, along with a more reverential mood, serving as a contrast to the more all-encompassing aesthetic of the first three sections. For the most part, the organ accompaniment is dialed back to a less active role. The theme of the A section returns as the textual focus shifts from God the Father to God the Son, followed by a return of the D section’s theme, now inflected by the intervening passage.

When the function of supplication arrives, a whole different mood is introduced, somewhat more mysterious and subdued. The choir sings unaccompanied for the entire passage. While the melody bears some deeper similarities to other passages in the piece, the music here feels completely different, and almost out of step with the rest of the piece. This section is the most remote point from the feel of the glorification sections, which heightens the excitement when the B section suddenly returns within the span of two measures. This leap back into the “framing narrative” returns the piece to the original key and mood, in keeping with the textual return to the glorification focus. Thus, the piece ends grounded in its home tonality and feel.

**On the Prayer of the Sanctus**

The Sanctus is sung as the priest stands at the altar, at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer. The priest’s preface indicates that when we sing the Sanctus, we are joining with the angels in the eternal heavenly hymn of praise before the Godhead. Like the Kyrie, the Sanctus brings the liturgical action into a new, elevated state: communion with heaven.

With this in mind, it’s my opinion that the Sanctus should seek to musically depict a vision of heaven as the composer imagines it. Since God is endlessly creative, heaven is endlessly various, and therefore there are many, many ways of depicting it available. Regardless
of the musical content, every setting of the “Sanctus” offered in worship here on earth harmonizes with the eternal chorus of angels. In my setting, I explored this idea of the multifaceted variety one might experience in heaven.

As I was studying the text for the Sanctus, I took a special interest in the word *Sabaoth*. *Sabaoth* is a Latin transliteration of the Hebrew word צְבָאוֹת (ts'vaót), which literally translates to “armies.” In the Old Testament, צְבָאוֹת is used with God’s name to identify Him as the leader of the armies of Israel (1 Sam 17:45), and as Lord of the angelic hosts in heaven (Is 6:3). I was impressed by the expressive power this word. It suggests to me the overwhelming power of the multitude of angels, each with its own unique glory, all coming together to magnify the Glory of God. The aesthetic I chose for the Sanctus centers around the concept of *Sabaoth*. I wanted to evoke not only a multitude of angels, but also a variety of expressions of the word “Sanctus,” corresponding with the individuality of the angels and the variety of heaven.

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8 Gesenius. *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 
**Figure 3.** Form diagram of the Sanctus.

### Form in the Sanctus

The first half of the Sanctus is a triplication of the first line of the text: *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth*. These sections are meant to be multifaceted, freely jumping between various key areas, textures and tessituras from phrase to phrase. The passage is tied together by related melodic material and relatively consistent tempo. Each set of three phrases ends with a stronger statement on the text *Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, bringing out the intensity of the heavenly host united in worship. At various points in the passage, but most especially on the arrivals of the word *Sabaoth*, I use the recurring element of chords built from stacked fifths, which gives a sense of a great vertical space containing a multitude.

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<tr>
<td>m. 1</td>
<td>m. 6</td>
<td>m. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\text{Db M}$</td>
<td>$\text{Db M}$</td>
<td>AM</td>
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*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m. 24</td>
<td>m. 29</td>
<td>m. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\text{Ab M}$</td>
<td>$\text{Gb M}$</td>
<td>AM</td>
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*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

1 (cont.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m. 42</td>
<td>m. 47</td>
<td>m. 48</td>
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<td>AM</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>AM</td>
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*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.*

2

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<th>H</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m. 62</td>
<td>m. 79</td>
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<td>AM</td>
<td>AM</td>
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*Pleni sunt cæli... Benedictus qui venit...*
The third repeat of the first line reuses phrases B and E to establish a stable sense of A major, preparing for the more consistent second half of the piece. In contrast to the multifaceted first half, this passage is strophic, using the same counterpoint to set the lines Pleni sunt cæli...Hosanna in excelsis and Benedictus qui venit...Hosanna in excelsis. This dance-like yet more reserved mood lends itself to a more focused delivery of text. On the phrase gloria tua, the style abruptly realigns itself with the first half. It leaves behind diatonic harmony and polyphonic texture and brings in a musical reference to the line propter magnam gloriam tuam from the Gloria. After this outburst, it returns to the restraint of the second half, until it builds once again to the climactic Hosanna in excelsis. The Hosanna ends the piece on an E major harmony, with a mixture of a pure triad in the upper parts and the recurring stack of fifths in the lower parts. This ending quickly tonicizes E major, notably ending the piece away from the initial key of D-flat, but also away from the more likely candidate of A major, which had been in place for the whole second half of the piece. I intentionally avoided a “home key” arrival at the end of the Sanctus, because when we pray the Sanctus, we are merely joining into the eternal hymn of heaven, and therefore, I did not want to give the feeling that something eternal had been completed.

On the Prayer of the Agnus Dei

The Agnus Dei is the only piece in the Mass Ordinary sung before the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He is invoked as the Agnus Dei, the “Lamb of God” referenced by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and Revelation (5:6). The Lamb of God represents Christ’s role as sacrificial victim for the sins of the world, which is why the Lamb in Revelation is represented as having been slain. However, the Lamb of God is more than just an innocent victim: by virtue of His sacrifice, He is worthy to be our judge. Thus, in our prayer to the Lamb
we say *miserere nobis*, asking for mercy on Judgement Day, and finally, *dona nobis pacem*, asking for peace in the knowledge that our plea for mercy will be heard.

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<tr>
<td>m. 1</td>
<td>m. 8</td>
<td>m. 9</td>
<td>m. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am</td>
<td>Am</td>
<td>F♯m</td>
<td>F♯m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnus Dei</td>
<td>qui tollis peccata mundi</td>
<td>miserere nobis</td>
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<th>2</th>
<th>A</th>
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<tr>
<td>m. 29</td>
<td>m. 36</td>
<td>m. 37</td>
<td>m. 52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am</td>
<td>Am</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>EM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnus Dei</td>
<td>qui tollis peccata mundi</td>
<td>miserere nobis</td>
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<tr>
<td>m. 65</td>
<td>m. 72</td>
<td>m. 73</td>
<td>m. 78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Am</td>
<td>Am</td>
<td>F♯m</td>
<td>F♯m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnus Dei</td>
<td>qui tollis peccata mundi</td>
<td>dona nobis pacem</td>
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<th>Coda</th>
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<td>m. 114</td>
<td>m. 117</td>
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<td>AM</td>
<td>AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>dona nobis pacem</td>
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**Figure 4.** Form diagram of the Agnus Dei.

**Form in the Agnus Dei**

My setting of the Agnus Dei responds to Jesus’ role as our victim, judge, and advocate.

The music of the A sections takes up Christ as victim, with a mood of reverential and commiserative worship. The B sections and D section are about Christ as judge, and the C sections address Christ as advocate.

The large-scale sections of the Agnus Dei have a ternary action similar to what is seen in the Kyrie. As far as the A sections go, the contrast introduced in 2A is subtle, the only difference being alterations in the harmony that prefigure the harmony of the D section. When the A section
returns for the final time, it comes back in its unaltered form. The B and D sections showcase a
more obvious narrative arc. The contrast in mood here is between hope in God’s mercy and fear
of our own sinfulness. The B section uses material stylistically consistent with the A sections but
in a lighter, more luminous feel. The D section is where the human fear comes in, represented
musically by a stark stylistic departure from the rest of the piece. The texture becomes an almost
lethargic homophony, and the harmony becomes dissonant and ambiguous. When the B section
returns, it brings its original melody, but references the harmony of the D section. This adds a
poignancy to the sense of hope and builds up tension that is ultimately released in 3C. The C
sections themselves feature a different sort of arc. The first and last versions are similar in mode
and harmony, but the last one is an extended version of the first, with a new soprano melody
introduced and an extra passage referencing 2C. These two sections are in a mood of
consolation, corresponding with the hopeful mood of the B sections. Section 2C is more pleading
or apologetic, as we have been reminded of our sin in the D section.

As mentioned above, the coda of the Agnus Dei imitates the coda of the Kyrie,
connecting the first and last movement of the mass setting and thereby providing closure. This
closure is especially helpful because it replaces the function typically achieved in tonal music by
the return of the tonic, which I chose not to observe for reasons stated above.
Rhythm in the Gloria

In both B sections of the Gloria, the basic meter is 5/4, divided as 3+2. This division is established mainly by the choir (represented here by the soprano line), through word stress and harmony, and corroborated by the arpeggiation of the organ. While agreeing with the overall grouping of 3+2, the organ plays against the strongly present beat of the choir by splitting the triple grouping into two even groups of six sixteenth notes, forming a 3 against 2 polyrhythm. This same process occurs in the triple groupings of the 7/4 measure (m. 110), which is divided as 3+1+3.

For the choir, the 8/4 measure (m. 111) is the same as m. 110, with the addition of a quarter rest at the end. The grouping thus becomes 3+1+3+1. However, the organ breaks its pattern of obeying the choir’s rhythmic groupings by extending its arpeggio into the fourth beat of the measure. Following this extra long climb upwards, the organ gives the impression of rapid acceleration by subdividing its final two groupings of six sixteenths into two sets of three and then three sets of two, respectively. Note also that the pedal, which had followed the beat of the choir throughout the passage, here joins the organ, which partially destabilizes the beat. All of this serves to build anticipation towards the climax of the piece in measure 112, in which the opening motive of the piece returns at fortissimo to the text Jesu Christe.
Example 2. Incipit of *O Salutaris Hostia*.


**Chant in the Sanctus**

In the B section of the Sanctus, I take the traditional Gregorian chant *O Salutaris Hostia* and build a polyphonic inner voice texture from it. The sixteen notes of the incipit (Ex. 2) appear in the alto, tenor, and baritone, each transposed to a different mode (separated by fourths) and each beginning at a different point (separated by 5 quarter note spans). The notes are rotated to fit within the four measure span, so although the alto and tenor reach the fourth barline before completing the incipit, the notes “continue” in the preceding bars. The occurrence of the same

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melody against different parts of itself at different points in time evokes the timeless nature of heaven.

Certain notes in the inner voices were adjusted to make the counterpoint and harmony consistent throughout the passage. These notes have been marked, and are explained in the following list:

1. A becomes G♯ to resolve the tenor A on the preceding beat.
2. G♯ becomes F♯ to turn an octave with the alto into a major ninth.
3. F♯ becomes E to turn an octave with the alto into a major ninth.
4. E becomes F♯ to turn an octave with the alto into a minor seventh.
5. E becomes D to form an augmented fourth with the soprano by contrary motion.
6. A becomes E to avoid a unison with the baritone and to add stability to the harmony of the downbeat.
7. G♯ becomes A to add stability to the harmony of the downbeat.
Harmony in the Agnus Dei

The D section of the Agnus Dei features some of the most dissonant and interesting harmony in the entire work. The passage is based on the juxtaposition of raised and lowered scale degrees. For example, in m. 37 the tenor G natural (minor seventh of A) on the second beat is followed by a G sharp (major seventh of A) in the soprano on the third beat, which is answered by another G natural in the tenor. The annotation under the staves in Ex. 4 notes the current pitch center of the music, as well as which scale degrees are stable and which are in variation. Stable pitches are marked with empty noteheads.

In the first four measures, the pitch center remains on A. For the first half of the phrase, the four pitches of the downbeat of measure 37 are taken as the stable pitches, with scale degrees 3, 4, and 7 in variation. However, in measure 39, an F natural appears on the fourth beat in the tenor, destabilizing the F sharp. Measure 40 oscillates between two harmonies consisting primarily of unstable pitches, completing the phrase with even greater harmonic uncertainty.
This uncertainty is reinforced by the lack of the bass A on the fourth beat of measure 41 and the lack of the F sharp in the soprano, which had been the melodic “anchor tone.”

From here, the pitch center begins to shift. The movement of the pitch center is evidenced by the piecewise transposition of the soprano melody from the previous phrase (noted above the staff in Ex. 4). Following the soprano’s transposition, we see pitch centers of B, E, A, and finally, G. The fourth measure is especially significant, because the stability of B natural and E natural, constant through the entire passage, are undermined here.

The Purpose of this Project

This project was an opportunity for me to test and develop my ideas on liturgical music. My initial inspiration for undertaking it is similar to my impetus for pursuing liturgical music professionally: I see a need for a new kind of discourse on liturgical music which will allow Catholic worship to more comprehensively achieve its aims. The mass setting is a first step in this process, but it has been a fruitful one. Throughout the project, I have been able to learn more about the liturgy and how music serves it, come to more fully appreciate where my mass setting fits in my understanding of liturgical music, and developed new ideas for how to advance good music in the liturgy.

In his Instruction on sacred music, *Tra le sollecitudini*, Pope St. Pius X states the purpose of liturgical music:

Sacred music, being a complementary part of the solemn liturgy, participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful. It contributes to the decorum and the splendor of the ecclesiastical
ceremonies, and since its principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries.10

This paragraph cleanly summarizes the unchanging, underlying purpose of liturgical music. It clothes the liturgy and makes it more effective, so it must be aligned to the purposes of the liturgy, namely, “the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.” This means that liturgical music can’t be just any music, elevated by its use. It must be capable of glorifying God and disposing humans to grace in itself, so that when it is used in the liturgy, it actively augments the liturgy’s purposes. This is the kind of music I want to write and promote in Catholic liturgy.

*Tra le sollecitudini* was published in 1903, before the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II reformed the liturgy of the Roman Rite, placing particular emphasis on the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy. One of the principal ways this was implemented was by increased congregational singing during mass. The vast majority of music written for the Catholic liturgy since Vatican II has been written so as to accommodate untrained singing by the congregation. In my thesis proposal, I spoke of the tradition of the mass setting as a great musical form of the common practice period of western music. I also described the gradual divorce between the mass setting as an artistic musical form and its actual use in the Mass itself, in part precipitated by the liturgical changes of Vatican II. My initial aim in this project was to continue this tradition with a

contribution of my own, which possessed the scope and proportion of the traditional mass setting, but was expressly written for the modern liturgy.

The inherent tension in this project is that the modern liturgy, with its emphasis on congregational participation, is not typically meant to be celebrated with a choral ordinary. To be clear, in writing this piece, I am not advocating for the choral ordinary as the norm for the modern liturgy. However, I do argue that the choral ordinary still deserves a place in the actual liturgical life of the church, and not to merely be preserved for concert use. The choral ordinary, when composed expressly for the liturgy and sung in devotion before a properly catechized congregation, integrally achieves the aims of the liturgy: “the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.” More generally, I support the increased use of choral music in the liturgy, where appropriate.

Writing choral music that does not include the congregation often allows a greater level of sophistication and artistry to be introduced into liturgical music. As I mentioned above, liturgical music must serve the liturgy by its own virtues, rather than by its usage alone. If this is the case, then it follows that choral music offers unique virtues, and therefore unique ways of serving the liturgy.

Choral liturgical music does not need to exist at the expense of active participation of the congregation. There is plenty of room in the liturgy for choral music and congregational singing to exist side by side. Furthermore, choral singing does not eliminate the possibility of active internal participation by the faithful. When choral music is sung in the liturgy, the congregation still prays the prayers of the liturgy by their hearing. Pope St. John Paul II spoke to this in an address on the liturgy when he said:
[A]ctive participation does not preclude the active passivity of silence, stillness and listening: indeed, it demands it. Worshippers are not passive, for instance, when listening to the readings or the homily, or following the prayers of the celebrant, and the chants and music of the liturgy. These are experiences of silence and stillness, but they are in their own way profoundly active.\textsuperscript{11}

An increased focus on choral singing in the liturgy offers an opportunity for the faithful to cultivate the “stillness and listening” which St. John Paul II speaks of here.

Throughout the course of this project, I have developed my ideas on liturgical music, including the ones mentioned above, as well as others beyond the scope of the project. In particular, I am interested in finding new ways to bridge the best aspects of the Church’s tradition of sacred music and the principle of active participation. For example, I see potential for cultivating the level of artistry available in choral music through integration of congregational singing and choral singing. My next major project will likely take up these concerns.