

Progressive Solemnity and the Dominican Liturgy

What can medieval liturgical and theological traditions teach us about effective approaches to liturgical solemnity?

by Fr. Innocent Smith, O.P.



In recent years, there has been much discussion of the concept of “progressive solemnity,” a principle that seeks to modulate a particular celebration of the liturgy based on the importance of the day or office in question. Although the term was first coined in the twentieth-century, the concept has existed in the church’s liturgical practice for centuries.¹ As we try to interpret and apply this concept today, we can gain much insight from a careful examination of historical theories and applications of progressive solemnity. Among the various liturgical traditions of the church, one that is of particular value for understanding this principle is the medieval Dominican liturgy, developed by the Order of

Preachers in the mid-thirteenth century. The Dominican liturgy is a useful locus of study because, in addition to being textually and musically well-documented, it served as the backdrop and inspiration for several important theologians and liturgists of the thirteenth century. In this paper, I will examine the concept of solemnity as articulated by the Dominican friars St. Thomas Aquinas, Humbert of Romans, and Jerome of Moravia, and as expressed in the chants of the Dominican liturgy itself, with the aim of providing resources for enriching contemporary reflections on this topic.

Thomas Aquinas on Solemnity

To begin with, we must consider what solemnity is in itself. For Thomas Aquinas, solemnity in the liturgy and the sacraments helps the Christian to come to the worship of God with greater devotion, and thus to be better disposed to receive the fruits of

¹Cf. Mary Frandsen, *Crossing Confessional Boundaries: The Patronage of Italian Sacred Music in Seventeenth-Century Dresden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 353.

Fr. Innocent Smith, O.P. is a Dominican friar of the Province of St. Joseph. He is presently assigned to the Priory of St. Vincent Ferrer in New York City.

*The worship of
God by human
beings has both
internal and
external aspects.*

the sacraments.² For Aquinas, in divine worship

we pay God honor and reverence, not for His sake . . . but for our own sake, because by the very fact that we revere and honor God, our mind is subjected to Him; wherein its perfection consists ... Now the human mind, in order to be united to God, needs to be guided by the sensible world ... Wherefore in the Divine worship it is necessary to make use of corporeal things, that man's mind may be aroused thereby, as by signs, to the spiritual acts by means of which he is united to God.³

²Cf. Sr. Thomas Augustine Becker's survey of Thomas's writings on the topic of solemnity: "The Role of *Solemnitas* in the Liturgy According to Saint Thomas Aquinas" in Matthew Levering and Michael Dauphinas, eds., *Rediscovering Aquinas and the Sacraments: Studies in Sacramental Theology* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2009), pp. 114–136.

³*Summa theologiae*, II-II.81.7.R.

Thus, the worship of God by human beings has both internal and external aspects:

Since man is composed of soul and body, each of these should be applied to the worship of God; the soul by an interior worship; the body by an outward worship ... And as the body is ordained to God through the soul, so the outward worship is ordained to the internal worship [which] consists in the soul being united to God by the intellect and affections.⁴

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the use of the body and the voice in divine worship helps to arouse devotion in the heart of the worshipper, and allows one to "serve God with all that he has from God, that is to say, not only with his mind, but also with his body."⁵ The voice, in particular, helps to "excite interior devotion, whereby the mind of the person praying is raised to God."⁶ As Thomas clarifies, "vocal prayer is employed, not in order to tell God something He does not know, but in order to lift up the mind of the person praying or of other persons to God."⁷ As Thomas writes elsewhere, "we employ words, in speaking to God, not indeed to make known our thoughts to Him Who is the searcher of hearts, but that we may bring ourselves and our hearers to reverence Him. Consequently we need to praise God with our lips, not indeed for His sake, but for our own sake; since by praising Him our devotion is aroused

⁴*Ibid.*, I-II.101.2.R.

⁵*Ibid.*, II-II.83.12.R.

⁶*Ibid.*, II-II.83.12.R.

⁷*Ibid.*, II-II.83.12.1um.

towards Him.”⁸ Thomas points out further that “the use of music in the divine praises is a salutary institution, that the souls of the faint-hearted may be the more incited to devotion,”⁹ although he makes a characteristically Dominican clarification by pointing out that “to arouse men to devotion by teaching and preaching is a more excellent way than by singing.”¹⁰

In liturgy and the sacraments, we encounter God through physical symbols and words. God takes this initiative in providing modes of reaching him that are suited to our nature. In instituting the sacraments, Jesus Christ chose certain words and objects to serve as the form and matter of the individual sacraments. However, as a study of the diversity of legitimate liturgical forms reveals, the church has the right and duty to develop liturgical rites for the divinely instituted sacraments, a fact of which Thomas is well aware. For Thomas, these ecclesial arrangements help us to receive the sacraments with the proper disposition: “human institutions observed in the sacraments are not essential to the sacrament; but belong to the solemnity which is added to the sacraments in order to arouse devotion and reverence in the recipients.”¹¹ Among the various liturgical rites, Thomas states that the Eucharist is fittingly celebrated “with greater solemnity than the other sacraments,” because the whole mystery of our salvation is comprised in the Eucharist.¹² For Thomas, then, solemnity is principally

*In liturgy and the
sacraments, we
encounter God through
physical symbols and
words.*

concerned with the human institutions and arrangements that help us to celebrate the liturgy and the sacraments in such a way that we may be brought to true, inward, spiritual worship by means of exterior, bodily worship. As we have seen, singing has a particularly important role in exciting devotion, and it is fitting that some liturgical rites are celebrated with greater solemnity than others.

Humbert and the Ancient Constitutions

Now that we have outlined a basic understanding of solemnity in itself, we will consider early Dominican approaches to the principle of progressive solemnity. Two important sources for understanding this topic are the *Ancient Constitutions* formulated during the first decades of the Order’s existence and the *Commentary on the Constitutions* written by Humbert of Romans. The *Constitutions* contain detailed regulations on the performance of the liturgy, constituting a collective attitude about the liturgy that predates the formulation of the distinctive rite

⁸Ibid., II-II.91.1.R.

⁹Ibid., II-II.91.2.R.

¹⁰Ibid., II-II.91.2.3um.

¹¹Ibid., III.64.2.1um

¹²Ibid., III.83.4.

*St. Thomas writes
within this tradition
when he states that
liturgical prayer should
not last such a long time
that the devotion of
the participants would
grow slack.*

of the Order. Humbert of Romans, a contemporary and close collaborator of Thomas Aquinas, who, as Master of the Order, played a central role in the standardization of the Dominican liturgy, wrote a partial commentary on the *Constitutions* which offers precious insights into Dominican attitudes about the liturgy.

One important passage from the *Ancient Constitutions* that determined the Dominican approach to the performance of the liturgy was a succinct description of the performance of the Divine Office:

All the hours in the church should be said briefly and succinctly, lest the brothers should lose devotion or be at all impeded in their study. We say that this is to be done such that in the middle of the verse a *metrum* with a pause should be preserved, not by extending the voice at the pause or at the end of the verse, but, as was said, they should be ended briefly and succinctly. However, this should be

observed to a greater or lesser extent according to the season.¹³

This succinct description captures several important details about early Dominican attitudes to the liturgy. First, the liturgy is to be sung “briefly and succinctly” so that the devotion of the brothers may not become lax, and that their study be impeded as little as possible. According to Humbert, study is not to be preferred to prayer as such, but to overly prolix prayer.¹⁴ St. Thomas writes within this tradition when he states that liturgical prayer should not last such a long time that the devotion of the participants would grow slack.¹⁵ Humbert offers several reasons why a shorter office is better than a longer one, the first of which is that other-

¹³*Constitutiones antiquae*, d. 1, c. 4. For a critical edition of the *Constitutiones antiquae* (also known as the “Primitive Constitutions”), see Antoninus Hendrik Thomas, ed., “Constitutiones antiquae Ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum,” in *De oudste Constituties van de dominicanen: Voorgeschiedenis, tekst, bronnen, ontstaan en ontwikkeling* (1215–1237), Bibliothèque de la Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique 42 (Louvain: Bureel van de R.H.E. Universiteitsbibliotheek, 1965), 304–69.

¹⁴Humbert of Romans, “Expositio in Constitutiones,” in *Opera de vita regulari*, ed. Joachim Joseph Berthier, vol. 2 (Rome: A. Befani, 1889), 1–178, at 97.

¹⁵*Summa*, II-II.83.14: “It is becoming that prayer should last long enough to arouse the fervor of the interior desire: and when it exceeds this measure, so that it cannot be continued any longer without causing weariness, it should be discontinued. ... And just as we must judge of this in private prayers by considering the attention of the person praying, so too, in public prayers we must judge of it by considering the devotion of the people.”

wise the choir would be evacuated as many would seek occasions of staying away based on this prolixity!¹⁶

Despite the emphasis on brief and succinct singing, the constitutions also order that pauses are to be made in the middle of verses of the psalms, showing that the desired rapidity was not to be sought at the expense of a certain dignity of performance. This *metrum* or mediant pause is “observed to a greater or lesser extent according to the season.” This statement of the *Constitutions* leads Humbert to offer an extensive reflection on the reasons why the liturgy is performed with greater solemnity on feast days. First of all, the fact that the friars are not occupied with lectures or study on major feast days removes the necessity of a rapid performance of the liturgy. Secondly, on feast days more outside guests come to the priory for the liturgy, and Humbert suggests that “it is just that the [liturgy] is said more devoutly for the sake of their edification.” Thirdly, because feasts are instituted so that people may have leisure to be with God, it is fitting that they should linger more in performing the liturgy. Further, Humbert points out that the devil hates feast days and tries to disturb them, and that thus the choir should perform the liturgy with greater solemnity and devotion to prevent the devil’s victory. Finally, Humbert points out that feast days prefigure the “great future feast in which there will continual and most devout praise,” and that thus the liturgy should be performed with great devotion on feast days so that they may prefigure the eternal feast more clearly.

In this presentation, we see a concise summary of early Dominican attitudes to

*There is a clear
recognition that the
earthly liturgy prefigures
the heavenly liturgy and
that this prefigurement is
more clearly articulated
by liturgical solemnity.*

solemnity in the liturgy. First of all, the duties of study, preaching, and teaching are seen to necessitate concision with respect to the liturgy, but these duties do not preclude a more solemn celebration on certain occasions. Next, the greater solemnity of feast days is seen to be of pastoral benefit for assisting the laity in coming to the liturgy with devotion. Further, we see that the devotion enkindled by solemnity is understood within the context of both commitment to God and protection from demonic distractions. Finally, there is a clear recognition that the earthly liturgy prefigures the heavenly liturgy and that this prefigurement is more clearly articulated by liturgical solemnity. Although these principles are articulated in the context of Dominican conventual life, by extension they are of great relevance to pastoral practice, for instance in articulating the reason why there should be a difference between a daily parish Mass and a Sunday celebration, or for helping the faith-

¹⁶*Expositio*, II:85–86.

ful to understand that liturgical solemnity is not merely a question of aesthetics, but one that is deeply related to spiritual combat and preparation for heaven.

The Dominican Liturgy and Jerome of Moravia

Having considered the perspectives on solemnity offered by Thomas and Humbert, we will now consider the ways in which the Dominican liturgy itself utilizes gradations of solemnity to demarcate the relative importance of feasts, offices, and components of the liturgy.

In the medieval Dominican liturgy, five ranks of liturgical feasts are observed: from highest to lowest, these are: *Totum Duplex*, *Duplex*, *Semiduplex*, *Simplex*, and *Trium Lectionum*.¹⁷ The various feast ranks effect the way in which the liturgy is performed principally in two areas: the ministers of the liturgy and the musical settings employed in the liturgy.

With respect to the ministers of the liturgy, the major difference between the various ranks is found in the number of singers who perform various chants. The Dominican Ordinarium, which gives both a list of chants and texts used throughout the year at Mass and Office as well as instructions for the general performance of the liturgy, provides specific instructions for the number of singers who ought to sing chants on

¹⁷In the Dominican Calendar of 1254, there were 23 *Totum Duplex* feasts (including the major feasts of the Temporale such as Christmas and Easter), 4 *Duplex* feasts, 22 *Semi-duplex*, 36 *Simplex*, and 30 *Trium Lectionum* feasts. Cf. Ludovicus Rousseau, *De ecclesiastico officio Fratrum Praedicatorum: secundum ordinationem venerabilis magistri, Humberti de Romanis* (Rome: A. Manuzio, 1927), pp. 78–83.

various occasions.¹⁸ The invitatory at Matins, for instance, is led by one cantor on feasts of the lowest rank, but is sung by two cantors on *Simplex* and *Semiduplex* feasts, and by four cantors on *Duplex* and *Totum Duplex* feasts.¹⁹ Similarly, the long responsories are each led by one cantor on *Simplex* feasts, but by two cantors on *Semiduplex* and four cantors on *Duplex* feasts.²⁰ In addition to the extra cantors, *Duplex* feasts are distinguished by being officiated by the superior of the community, by the cantor and subcantor singing certain chants from the middle of the choir rather than from their choir stalls, and by the incensation of the altar at the Gospel canticles of Vespers and Lauds.²¹ Finally, the antiphons at the Magnificat and Benedictus are sung both before and after the canticles on *Totum Duplex* feasts, whereas on lower ranks the antiphon is only fully sung after the canticle.²² These variations are subtle, but taken as a whole contribute to a liturgical ethos that demarcates their importance on a particular feast.

When we consider the music of the

¹⁸The *Ordinarium* from Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1 has been edited in Franciscus-M. Guerrini, ed., *Ordinarium juxta ritum Sacri Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum jussu rev.mi patris fr. Ludovici Theissling eiusdem ordinis magistri generalis editum* (Rome: Apud Collegium Angelicum, 1921).

¹⁹*Ordinarium*, ¶¶269, 272, 282 (pp. 69, 71).

²⁰*Ordinarium*, ¶¶272, 274, 278 (pp. 69–71). The number of cantors for the responsories on *Duplex* feasts has further variations for individual responsories: cf. *Ordinarium*, ¶¶278, 283, 287 (pp. 71–72).

²¹*Ordinarium*, ¶¶275, 277, 280 (pp. 70–71).

²²*Ordinarium*, ¶287 (p. 72).

Dominican liturgy, we find the gradations of feast rank most clearly present in the texts that are invariable or metrically regular, namely the chants of the *Kyrie* such as the Gloria and Sanctus, and the hymns of the Divine Office. In the Dominican liturgy, seven cycles are provided for the Ordinary of the Mass based on the rank or class of the feast, ranging from a very simple setting for ferial days to an ornate setting for *Totum Duplex* feasts. The development of the Mass cycle was a thirteenth-century phenomenon in which the Dominicans (along with the Franciscans) took a leading role—in prior centuries, musical manuscripts had provided a selection of melodies for each part of the Mass without grouping the settings according to feast rank.²³ Thus, the Dominican arrangement of Mass cycles was rather avant-garde, which helps us realize that the friars were self-conscious in their use of musical solemnity to articulate liturgical solemnity.

To demonstrate this arrangement, note the final line of the Sanctus, “Osanna in Excelsis,” from four settings as they are hierarchically arranged in the Dominican liturgy. As we descend from highest to lowest, there is a shift from melismatic settings (where four or more notes are frequently used on a syllable) to neumatic settings (where two- or three-note neumes predominate) and finally to a syllabic setting where most syllables get only one or two notes.

²³Cf. David Hiley, “Kyrieale,” in *Grove Music Online*.

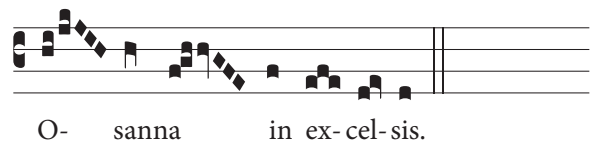
Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 362v:

In toto duplici et duplici



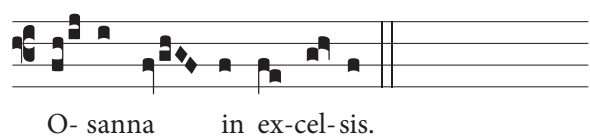
Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 363ra:

In festis semiduplicibus



Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 363rb:

In dominicis et festis simplicibus



Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 363va:

In profestis diebus



When we consider the hymns of the Divine Office we find an even more sophisticated system which, by carefully arranging the use of texts and melodies, links and distinguishes Sundays and weekdays, feasts of different ranks, and the liturgical seasons of the year. In the first case, the Dominican liturgy employs only one text for each of the major hours in the time throughout the year, rather than providing the more common seven-day cycle of hymns. However, the Dominican liturgy assigns a solemn melody for these texts on Sundays and a simple melody of weekdays. One example of this is the Vespers hymn *Lucis Creator optime*: the Sunday melody is neumatic, having two or three notes on many of the


syllables, while the ferial melody is almost entirely syllabic, providing more than one note on only a single syllable.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 318vb:
*Dominica prima post octavas Epiphanie ... ad
 vespas ymnus*



Lu- cis cre- a- tor op-time, lu-cem di- e-
 rum pro- fe- rens, primor- di- is lu- cis no-
 ve mundi pa-rans o-ri-gi-nem.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 319ra:
Cantus ferialis ad vespas et completorium



Lu-cis Cre- a- tor optime, lu-cem di- e-rum
 pro-fe-rens, primordi- is lu- cis no-ve mun-
 di pa-rans o-ri-gi-nem.

As we can see, the ferial melody is purely syllabic, whereas the Sunday melody is neumatic, having two or three notes on many of the syllables. A similar use of melodic complexity to distinguish Sunday and ferial days is found for all of the hymns used in the time throughout the year. Within the melodies assigned for ferial days or for Sundays, we can further distinguish between those assigned for the major

hours and the minor hours; the melodies for the minor hours tend to have a smaller musical range and to be somewhat simpler than those assigned for the major hours.

In addition to the melodic differentiation of weekdays and Sundays, the seasons of the liturgical year are differentiated by the character of the melodies assigned for the seasonal hymns. This is strikingly illustrated in the difference between the simple, syllabic melody assigned for Vespers during Advent, *Conditor Alme Syderum*, and the complex, neumatic melody assigned for Christmas, *Veni Redemptor Gentium*.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 318rb:
In adventu Domini ad vespas ymnus



Condi-tor alme sy-de-rum, e-terna lux cre-
 denti- um, Chri-ste re-demptor omni- um,
 exaudi pre-ces suppli-cum.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 318rb:
In nativitate Domini ad vespas ymnus



Ve-ni re-demptor gen-ti- um, ostende par-
 tum virgi-nis, mi-re- tur omne se-cu-lum,
 ta-lis de-cet par-tus De- um.

When we compare the melodies assigned for Lent and Easter, we find a difference based not on the number of notes for each syllable but on the range of the melody, with the Lenten tune possessing a constrained range of six tones in comparison to the nine tones of the Easter melody.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 319ra:
*Dominica prima in Quadragesima ad vespas
ymnus*



Audi be-nigne condi-tor, nostras pre- ces
cum fle-ti-bus in hoc sacro ie-iu-ni-o
fu-sas quadra-ge-na-ri-o.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 318rb:
In octavis Pasche ad vespas ymnus




Ad ce-nam agni pro-vi-di et sto-lis al-bis
candi-di, post transi-tum ma-ris rubri,
Chri-sto ca-na- mus princi-pi.

The third type of melodic differentiation closely parallels the structure of the *Kyrie* settings by providing a set of melodies that are coordinated with the different

feast ranks. One distinctive aspect of the Dominican liturgy is that the melodies for the common of the saints are not based on the category of the saint (for instance providing a distinct melody for virgins and a different melody for martyrs) but instead are assigned on account of the rank of the feast being celebrated. Hymns from the Common of Saints in iambic dimeter (long meter) have four melodies assigned for the various ranks of feasts (with a fifth provided for within octaves of other feasts):

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 322rb:
In totis duplicibus et duplicibus



Iam lu-cis orto sy-de- re, De-um pre- ce-
mur suppli-ces ut in di-urnis ac-ti-bus
nos ser- vet a no-cen-ti-bus.

Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 322rb:
In festo semiduplici



Iam lu-cis orto sy-de- re, De-um pre-
cemur suppli-ces ut in di-urnis ac-ti-
bus nos servet a no-cen-ti-bus.

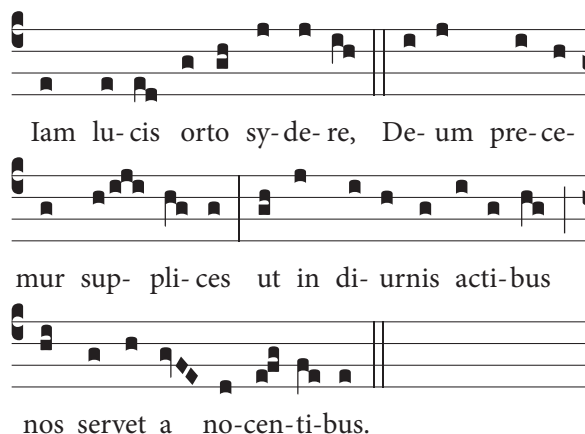
Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 322rb:
In festo simplici



Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 322rb:
In festo trium lectionum



Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, fol. 322rb:
Infra octavas



*As with the Kyriale,
the higher ranked feasts
are assigned more
ornate melodies, with
the differentiation
being based both on the
number of notes per
syllable and the range of
the melody.*

As with the *Kyriale*, the higher ranked feasts are assigned more ornate melodies, with the differentiation being based both on the number of notes per syllable and the range of the melody.

A different aspect of solemnity is articulated by the Dominican music theorist Jerome of Moravia in chapter twenty-four of his *Tractatus de Musica*:²⁴ in compos-

²⁴Hieronymus de Moravia, *Tractatus de Musica*, ed. Christian Meyer, Guy Lobrechton, and Carola Hertel-Geay, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 250 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 166: "Hic igitur est quinto notandum, quod si musicus pulcherimam istoriam de sancto uel de sanctis facere cupit, hunc in faciendo ordinem debet habere, ut scilicet antiphonam

*Progressive solemnity
based on genre is
implicit in the more
solemn melodies assigned
for the Mass, where
the gradual, alleluia,
and offertory melodies
are considerably more
ornate than those of the
introit and communion
antiphons.*

ing new melodies for feasts, Jerome suggests that the Magnificat antiphons should be composed according to a set of princi-

uel anthiphonas in primis uesperis super psalmos statuat in duobus mixtis gradibus, et similiter omnes antiphonas in laudibus in matutinis. Antiphonas uero scilicet ad magnificat in primis uesperis et in secundis, et eciam ad benedictus, in missa sequenciam faciat de gradu pulcherimo siue de tercio, primum autem nocturnum cum antiphonis, responsoriis et uersibus de primo gradu, secundum de secundo, tercium uero de tercio gradu constituat.”

ples that lead to the most beautiful type of chant, whereas the other antiphons may be fittingly composed in a less beautiful manner. This indicates that within a particular set of chants for a feast, some may deserve greater solemnity than others. This phenomenon may be often observed in the Dominican office when comparing the antiphons for the psalms of an office with those assigned for the canticles. This parallels the distinction between the tones provided for the recitation of the psalms and the elaborated versions provided for the recitation of the Gospel canticles.

Progressive solemnity based on genre is implicit in the more solemn melodies assigned for the Mass, where the gradual, alleluia, and offertory melodies are considerably more ornate than those of the introit and communion antiphons. The character of these proper chants of the Mass remain constant throughout the various seasons and feast ranks of the year: thus, Advent and Lent or lower ranked feasts are not given simpler proper chants, despite the simpler settings used on these occasions for the *Kyrie* and hymns of the Divine Office. In fact, Lent is one of the most solemn seasons of the year when it comes to the proper chants, as the extremely ornate tract replaces the alleluia and as distinct chants are given for each day of the season rather than repeating the Sunday chants on the ferial days.

In the Dominican liturgy, the use of more and less ornate liturgical genres is the principle musical mode of distinguishing the minor hours of Prime, Terce, Sext, None, and Compline from the major hours of Matins, Lauds, and Vespers. The major hours employ the musically solemn long responsories and canticle antiphons in addition to the psalm antiphons and short

*The Dominican
liturgical and theological
tradition can be of great
assistance in offering a
practical and pastorally
sensitive example
of progressive
solemnity.*

responsories shared with the minor hours. In contrast to the normal practice throughout the year, it is interesting to note that the medieval Dominican liturgy provides long responsories for the minor hours during Lent. Thus, in a way that is perhaps contrary to our expectations, the Dominican liturgy gives a greater solemnity to even the minor hours during this season of the year. A related feature of the major and minor hours is the assignment of one tone for the orations at Mass, Vespers, and Lauds, and a different tone for the orations at the minor hours. Although when heard out of context the tone for the minor hours may seem more musically complex than the solemn tone, there is a musical parallel between the solemn collect and the melody used to chant the Gospel and the simple collect and

the melody used to chant the short readings at the Divine Office.²⁵

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined Dominican perspectives on progressive solemnity as expressed by Thomas Aquinas, Humbert of Romans, and Jerome of Moravia. These sources help us to understand the nature of solemnity in itself as well as the pastoral and theological considerations that led the early Dominicans to celebrate the liturgy with brevity on certain occasions and with greater solemnity on others. The medieval Dominican liturgy in itself gives an example of an historical form of the liturgy that has an intrinsic and sophisticated system of progressive solemnity. This system modulates the performance of certain aspects of the liturgy based on the season and rank of the celebration while arranging other elements in a fixed hierarchical order. As we attempt to articulate the principle of progressive solemnity and apply this principle to contemporary celebrations of the liturgy, the Dominican liturgical and theological tradition can be of great assistance in offering a practical and pastorally sensitive approach of progressive solemnity. ♦

²⁵I am thankful to Fr. Thomas Donoghue, O.P., for pointing out the parallel between the collect tone and the gospel tone.



Sacred Music

Winter 2017 | Volume 144, Number 4

Editorial

Polyphony | William Mahrt 3

Articles

“Fulfilled is All that David Told”: Recovering the Christian Psalter
| Fr. Benedict Maria Andersen, O.S.B. 9

The Primacy of Gregorian Chant: Reflections on the Fiftieth Anniversary of
Musicam Sacram | Ted Krasnicki 26

Progressive Solemnity and the Dominican Liturgy | Fr. Innocent Smith, O.P. 42

Repertory

Palestrina’s Singers’ Lament: *Super flumina Babylonis* | William Mahrt. 54

Commentary

“Hermeneutic of Continuity” | William Mahrt 62

CMAA Announcements 65