

# St Colman's Society for Catholic Liturgy

## PRESS RELEASE

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TEXT BEGINS

“Following on the two highly successful liturgical conferences held in 2008 and 2009, St Colman's Society for Catholic Liturgy is pleased to announce that its Third International Liturgy Conference will take place from 10 to 12 July 2010 in Cork and Fota. The title of the Conference is “*Psallite sapienter: Benedict XVI on Sacred Music*”.

The expression “*Psallite sapienter*”, literally translated “Sing ye wisely”, is found in Psalm 46 of the Vulgate. According to Joseph Ratzinger, this text synthesises what Sacred Scripture has to say about the kind of music that befits worship. Such music must be in accordance with wisdom, and therefore with reason and, ultimately, with the revealed word that comes from God, with the Word made flesh. In this way, it becomes capable of touching the human heart and raising it to communion with God, as it did in the case of St Augustine: “Greatly did I weep at the beauty of your hymns and canticles, moved deeply by the sweet chants of your Church's music. The voices flowed into my ears and truth was poured forth into my heart, from which the emotion of my devotion overflowed: tears ran from my eyes and I was blessed in them” (*Confessions*, IX, 6, 14).

Unfortunately, recent decades have witnessed an impoverishment of liturgical music in many parishes and religious communities. All too often, church music has been reduced to the trivial and the banal, providing a poor substitute for the musical entertainment easily obtainable elsewhere and sadly failing to raise the heart and mind to God. Many factors have contributed to this situation, including an inadequate understanding of the kind of music appropriate to a liturgical setting, the banishment of the Church's extraordinary heritage of plainchant and polyphony to concerts and recordings, a superficial interpretation of “active participation” which has effectively eliminated specialised choir music in the name of congregational singing, where such exists, and a pastoral pragmatism that has led to the adoption for worship of the mass-produced melodies of popular music.

Mindful of these problems, Joseph Ratzinger has addressed the question of sacred music in various writings, especially in his liturgical trilogy, “*The Feast of Faith*”, “*A New Song for the Lord*” and “*The Spirit of the Liturgy*”. In these he indicates the principles which underlie its historical development, he describes the qualities which should characterise all forms of liturgical music and he proposes a way forward, which is in line with the Church's musical tradition, while encouraging genuine creativity.

The Society's Third International Liturgical Conference seeks to promote the ideas advanced in the Holy Father's writings on liturgical music. It also provides a forum for a younger generation of liturgists and musicians who are presently engaged in the recovery of the Church's musical heritage for liturgical use or in composing beautiful new and uplifting works of sacred music.

An international panel of experts in the fields of theology, liturgy and music – drawn from Ireland, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Australia and the United States of America – will discuss various theological, historical and practical questions relating to sacred music in the Roman Rite. Following an examination of Joseph Ratzinger's writings on sacred music, the Conference will consider such issues as the place of the Psalms in the liturgy, the importance of Gregorian chant and polyphony, the Second Vatican Council's directives on sacred music, the contribution of German musicologist Mgr Johannes Overath and sacred music in the Church today.

The Conference is open to the general public and registration forms can be obtained from the Society at [colman.liturgy@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:colman.liturgy@yahoo.co.uk) or by contacting the Secretary at Leevue, Rushbrooke, Cobh, Co. Cork."

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