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## IRENEUSZ PAWLAK'S CONCEPT OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING AS AN ELEMENT OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE LITURGY

**Abstract.** This article addresses the issue of the congregation's singing in the liturgy after the Second Vatican Council, understood as a sign and instrument of active participation. The topic is presented based on the publications of Rev. Ireneusz Pawlak (1935–2020), a distinguished Polish musicologist, professor, and composer, published in the monthly magazine *Msza Święta* between 1966 and 1990. The analysis primarily concerns the meaning, tasks, and ways of shaping the congregation's singing in the liturgy. It highlights the significant role of the assembly's participation in liturgical singing. The article further outlines the functions of communal singing in various parts of the Mass. From the analysis and synthesis of sources, the need for comprehensive musical formation of all community members emerges. Properly performed congregational singing offers an opportunity for every participant to engage actively and fruitfully in the sacred rites.

**Keywords:** liturgy; renewal; Holy Mass; Second Vatican Council; Ireneusz Pawlak

### INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council, in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, reaffirmed that the true desire of the Church is the formation and spiritual development of the faithful. Through their gathering around Christ and participation in His salvific mystery, the faithful may undergo inner transformation and receive spiritual strengthening. This is made possible by the constant presence of Christ in the Church, above all in the liturgical rites, through which the entire community of believers is able to experience the grace of sanctification.

The most essential moment of this salvific action – its source and summit – is the Eucharist, in which God bestows His grace upon the faithful through the Word

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of God and through Holy Communion.<sup>1</sup> This reality gives rise to the necessity of a profound liturgical formation of the faithful, aimed at fostering their conscious, full, and active participation in the liturgy.<sup>2</sup> The community is not merely a participant but a true subject of every liturgical celebration; consequently, its participation should be characterized by genuine engagement.

An essential component of the liturgy is music, which enhances the beauty and solemnity of the celebration.<sup>3</sup> Following the Second Vatican Council, which, in mandating liturgical reform, emphasized the role of singing by ministers and the assembly, as well as the importance of instrumental music, thus the need for comprehensive liturgical and musical formation of both clergy and laity became increasingly evident. This formation primarily required the introduction of all participants into the experience of the renewed liturgical rites and the cultivation of an attitude of co-responsibility and active participation in liturgical singing.

This understanding of formation was a lifelong commitment for Rev. Ireneusz Pawlak (1935–2020). He was a recognized specialist in the field of church music – initially a student, and later a long-standing lecturer at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. In his academic work, Pawlak focused on three main areas. The first of these was the history of Gregorian chant in Poland during the 16th and 17th centuries. He was deeply convinced that research into the past could open up new perspectives for the future. His second area of interest concerned the history of monodic music performed since the Middle Ages in the Cathedral of Gniezno. He undertook the task of supplementing the existing, yet incomplete, scholarly picture of this subject. His final major field of research was the renewal of liturgical music following the Second Vatican Council – a topic to which he devoted particular attention. Having the ability to compare earlier practices with contemporary legislation, he was able to evaluate the liturgical music reform with objectivity and insightfully assess the processes of renewal that took place during his lifetime. He became a tireless advocate of this cause.<sup>4</sup>

Ireneusz Pawlak was actively involved in promoting the renewal of the liturgy, among other means, through his collaboration with the editorial board of the journal *Msza Święta*.<sup>5</sup> As a result of this cooperation, a series of articles

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,” no. 1, 2, 7, 10, accessed August 6, 2025, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html).

<sup>2</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 112, 113.

<sup>4</sup> Dariusz Sobczak, *Koncepcja odnowy muzyki kościelnej po Vaticanum II w ujęciu ks. Ireneusza Pawlaka* (Gniezno: Wydawnictwo Gaudentinum, 2017), 217–220.

<sup>5</sup> Literal translation of the title is “Holy Mass.”

authored by him appeared in the journal between 1966 and 1990, addressing issues related to the liturgical and musical formation of both clergy and laity. These articles constitute the foundation of the present publication.

*Msza Święta* is a monthly publication focusing on liturgical and biblical topics, which has been published since 1936 by the Society of Christ Fathers for Poles Living Abroad. The primary mission of this congregation, is to serve Poles living outside their homeland. However, from its inception it has nurtured, in accordance with its Founder's wishes, a dedication to promoting knowledge of the Holy Mass and spreading its devotion among the faithful. For nearly ninety years, the journal has featured articles on the liturgy – especially the Eucharist and other sacraments – as well as Sacred Scripture, catechesis, formation, and events from the life of the Church. The journal is addressed not only to clergy but also to catechists, liturgical ministers, and the lay faithful.<sup>6</sup>

The years following the Second Vatican Council were marked by intensive editorial work as well as the popularity of the monthly journal, coinciding with the period of liturgical reform. Not only were the rites of the Mass themselves renewed, but the doors were also widely opened for the active participation of the faithful in the liturgy. As stated in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration."<sup>7</sup> This task became particularly close to the hearts of the journal's publishers and guided their efforts. As the Apostolic See issued successive implementation instructions and new liturgical books, there arose a need to popularize and explain their content to priests and the faithful. From then on, the editorial board of *Msza Święta*, in collaboration with Poland's foremost liturgists, published almost exclusively articles related to the reform. Regular contributors included among others Rev. Bogusław Nadolski, Rev. Stanisław Hartlieb, and Rev. Roman Michałek. Reflecting the changes introduced in liturgical music was the journalistic activity of Rev. Ireneusz Pawlak, who addressed topics concerning the liturgical and musical formation of clergy and laity in the pages of the journal. In his articles, he discussed issues of liturgical singing by ministers and the assembly, described principles for selecting chants in the Mass, and indicated how the liturgical year should be experienced through the lens of liturgical music.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Grzegorz Duszyński, "Historia miesięcznika," accessed August 6, 2025, [www.msza.tchr.org/historia\\_miesiecznika.html](http://www.msza.tchr.org/historia_miesiecznika.html).

<sup>7</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 48.

<sup>8</sup> Duszyński, "Historia miesięcznika."

The subject of this article is the understanding of congregational singing after the Second Vatican Council as articulated by Ireneusz Pawlak. Its aim is to demonstrate that the singing of the faithful expresses and actualizes their active participation in the liturgy, providing an opportunity for engagement and personal involvement in the celebrated rites. The article attempts to answer the following questions: What is Pawlak's perspective on the role of congregational singing in the liturgy? How does the singing of the faithful manifest their participation and commitment to the experienced mystery? Furthermore, which parts of the Mass include congregational singing, and why?

The originality of the study is underscored by the author's use of relatively unknown texts published by Ireneusz Pawlak in the journal *Msza Święta* between 1966 and 1990. Over the years, through his articles on liturgical singing and the liturgical-musical formation of the faithful, Pawlak became one of the important popularizers of these topics.

The issues addressed in this study will be presented in the following order. First, a general overview of congregational singing will be provided, including its functions and the manner in which it is shaped according to the understanding of Rev. Ireneusz Pawlak. As an observer and, in a certain sense, a co-creator of the liturgical reforms of the twentieth century, his perspective is especially valuable today. This will highlight the crucial role of the assembly's singing in fostering active participation in the liturgy. In the subsequent part of the paper, the specific moments of the Mass in which congregational singing was prescribed according to the legislation in force at the time will be discussed. On each occasion enumerated, along with the content that this singing is meant to express. On each occasion, it is intended to engage the participants of the liturgy, thereby involving them more fully in the experience of the various rites.

## 1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINGING OF THE FAITHFUL IN THE LITURGY

The faithful participating in the liturgy join, by their presence, in the prayer of Christ and the Church. They are called to deepen their understanding and experience of the rites through their active engagement, thus making these rites fruitful for themselves. One way in which they participate in the liturgy is through singing together as a gathered assembly. For this singing to become a stimulus for growth, just as in other areas of Church life, a thorough formation of the faithful is necessary. Such formation should lead members of the community, aware of the role of singing, to derive the greatest possible benefit from their participation in the liturgy.

The singing of the faithful is undoubtedly a sign of the unity of the assembly and an expression of communal prayer. However, there is a need for each member to be properly formed for such participation in the liturgy. The essence of this formation lies in the awareness of responsibility for the songs and fixed parts performed. This issue was addressed repeatedly by Pawlak.

From the beginnings of the development of liturgical celebration, one of the most important ways for the gathered people to participate was singing – a natural element of human celebration and festivity. The liturgy of that time also bore a clear influence from the synagogue tradition. The early Christian communities adopted the proclamation of the Word of God during prayer, including the singing of psalms. Following the legalization of Christianity, there was a dynamic development of liturgical rites within communities and significant progress in the construction of sacred buildings. This situation necessitated the division of various tasks and functions among members of the praying community. The first liturgical roles connected to the performance of solo music emerged, such as the main celebrant and the cantor. Nevertheless, all the chants were simple enough to be easily performed by the entire assembly.<sup>9</sup>

Until the 6th century, the order of the liturgy included a number of formula entrusted to the assembled people: primarily responses to the prayers and greetings of the celebrant, as well as fixed and variable chants and acclamations during the General intercessions. However, from the 7th century onward, the involvement of the faithful present at the liturgy diminished, as evidenced by liturgical books. There was no longer the mention of the participation of the faithful and by synodal decrees urging the assembly to respond to the celebrant. Consequently, the role of the people in the Eucharist decreased, and the development of more elaborate musical forms contributed to the decline of congregational singing, which increasingly came to be performed by more specialized groups.<sup>10</sup>

This state of affairs persisted in the Church for centuries, despite recommendations encouraging the faithful to participate in singing. One example is the document issued by the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction on Sacred Music and the Liturgy* (1958), in which the Apostolic See urged priests to ensure appropriate musical formation for those participating in the liturgy and emphasized their active participation in the Holy Mass. It was also mandated

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<sup>9</sup> Mariusz Białkowski, "Zgromadzenie wiernych," in *Msza Święta – rozumieć, aby lepiej uczestniczyć. Wykład liturgii Mszy*, ed. Jan Hadalski (Poznań: Hlondianum, 2013), 642.

<sup>10</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, *Muzyka liturgiczna po Soborze Watykańskim II w świetle dokumentów Kościoła* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Polihymnia, 2001), 275.

that on Sundays and feast days, the principal Eucharistic celebration should be sung.<sup>11</sup>

With the liturgical reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council, a return to the roots also took place regarding the communal singing of the assembly, as it was recognized as an excellent means to achieve the goal of revitalizing the participation of the faithful in the liturgy. Since specific actions during the celebration are performed by ordained ministers or other servers, singing is a perfect way to express, experience, and enable all those gathered to partake in the rites. It is emphasized that singing is an integral element of the liturgy – that is, the singing performed by the assembly is not an addition to the action or merely a way to pass time for observers, but is itself an important part of the celebration. Those responsible for overseeing the liturgy were entrusted with the duty to care for the singing of the faithful. This reminder underscores the importance of not neglecting the spiritual and musical formation of those gathered in the church so that they may be prepared to fulfill their role. The effort to familiarize composers of church music to consider the performance abilities of the faithful in their creations is noteworthy. Their obligation was stressed to ensure that new compositions are not only suitable for performance by musical ensembles but also support the active participation of the assembled people in singing.<sup>12</sup>

Further regulations concerning the singing of the faithful in the liturgy were issued in 1967 in the instruction *Musicam Sacram*. It emphasized the fundamental principle that one of the most important values of the rites is the gathered community, which, through singing, expresses its engagement and participation in the celebration. Therefore, appropriate attention must be given to the formation of the faithful for this type of participation, for example, through the organization of catecheses or liturgical training. It is also recommended that some vocally more challenging parts of the Mass, which might be difficult for the assembled community, be performed by a choir or other ensemble, while taking care not to completely exclude the people from the singing.<sup>13</sup>

Rev. Ireneusz Pawlak, publishing articles on liturgical and musical formation in the monthly magazine *Msza Święta*, repeatedly addressed the topic of congregational singing. From the outset, he noted a negative phenomenon in that the conciliar encouragement for the faithful to sing sometimes resulted in

<sup>11</sup> Sacred Congregation of Rites, “Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy,” no. 25–26, accessed August 6, 2025, <https://adoremus.org/1958/09/instruction-on-sacred-music/>.

<sup>12</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 30, 112, 113, 118, 121.

<sup>13</sup> Sacred Congregation of Rites, “Instruction on Music in the Liturgy *Musicam Sacram*,” no. 16, accessed August 6, 2025, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_instr\\_19670305\\_musicam-sacram\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_instr_19670305_musicam-sacram_en.html).

the exclusion of parish vocal ensembles or soloists from participation in the liturgy. As he explains: "Concern for liturgical renewal often relies on many innovations that are not yet well understood or deeply considered, and it neglects or even sometimes destroys what is old and traditional." In response to this phenomenon, he proposed the following solution: to highlight the participation in singing of both the faithful and the ensemble, the various Mass chants (both ordinary and proper) can be divided between these two groups.<sup>14</sup>

An important issue, according to the author, is ensuring the proper preparation of the assembled faithful to fulfill their role. A common abuse, as he mentions, was that "the singing of the people was often put in the forefront despite the fact that they were not prepared to undertake this function. As a result, chaos and confusion arose." One reason for the low quality of the faithful's singing, according to the author, was a superficial knowledge of the hymns and melodies of the fixed parts caused by a lack of proper formation. To properly fulfill their task in the liturgy, the faithful should know, in the author's opinion, at least a few melodies of the fixed and variable parts. He advises his readers: "Sung Masses require thorough preparation of the sung parts both from the people and the celebrant. This involves some effort and dedication. It is better not to sing at all, if the singing is unprepared and expected to be poor. Of course, this does not exempt anyone from the obligation to learn new liturgical texts and melodies."<sup>15</sup>

Another abuse to which the author draws attention is the combining of liturgical actions with other devotional practices. Highlighting improper practices, he emphasizes: "Today, it is no longer acceptable to maintain the custom of singing Vespers during the Holy Mass." He adds: "Another example is the still occasionally practiced custom of singing *Godzinki*,<sup>16</sup> litanies, etc., during the Holy Mass." The principle, however, should be that the assembled faithful fully participate in one specific celebration.<sup>17</sup>

To organise the singing of the faithful, Pawlak identified three groups, listed here in order of importance: invocations and acclamations, litanies, and common chants. Referring to the first group, the author reminds that although, as a rule, devotions are led by a priest or a delegated person, the faithful participate in the prayers they hear through appropriate responses. In this way, they show their agreement with the spoken content, affirm it, and identify themselves with the leader who presents the communal plea to God. This group of congregational

<sup>14</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Czy chóry kościelne są jeszcze potrzebne?" *Msza Święta* 23 (1967): 78–79.

<sup>15</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Więcej Mszy Świętych śpiewanych!" *Msza Święta* 24 (1968): 151.

<sup>16</sup> A traditional polish Marian devotion consisting of hymns, invocations and prayers addressed do Jesus and Mary.

<sup>17</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Czynności liturgiczne a nabożeństwa," *Msza Święta* 25 (1969): 56.



chants includes all “*Amen*” responses, dialogues before the Gospel and before the Preface, acclamations after the Gospel, after the consecration, after the embolism, and finally the *Sanctus*. An aspect emphasized by Pawlak in the formation of the faithful is the fact that “daily experience should teach us that everyone ought to take an active part in dialogues and acclamations. They cannot be left to the choir or a neighbor,” and he adds, “Whoever remains silent at the call shows disregard or lack of interest. [...] Whoever is silent among an acclaiming crowd cuts themselves off from everyone.” The second group of congregational chants described by Pawlak consists of litanies. Their very form indicates that they arose as a particular type of communal prayer, where the leader intones a petition, and the participants respond with an established versicle of supplication. In this way, they demonstrate that the entire prayer is their common plea. The most frequently occurring litanies in the liturgy include the *Kyrie*, *Agnus Dei*, and the General intercessions. The last, third group of congregational chants comprises common chants, such as the profession of faith and the Lord’s Prayer. Ireneusz Pawlak sensitizes readers to remember that the Creed, by its nature, should be recited by all participants in the liturgy: “Just as with responses, so too the profession of faith cannot be delegated to someone else but must be performed personally, as is the case, for example, during an oath.”<sup>18</sup>

In the conclusion of the discussed article, the author reminds that music should not be treated merely as an adornment of liturgical texts or as an artistic embellishment of the rites, but rather understood as a sign – a sign of the unity of the assembly. “It is now time for us to realize that the task of sacred music is not to melodically adorn liturgical texts or to rubrically emphasize the division of roles within the assembly. [...] Music must finally be considered from the perspective of a liturgical sign, which in many cases is a clearer and fuller expression of the unity of the assembly than other liturgical actions.” According to the author, it can often be a clearer sign than other gestures or actions, yet it must be understandable and capable of interpretation by the faithful. For this reason, the treasury of church music should be carefully nurtured.<sup>19</sup>

In one of his articles, Ireneusz Pawlak engages in a polemic with an anonymous author who, in an earlier issue of *Msza Święta*, apparently proposed musical pieces for performance during the preparation of the gifts. One of the criticisms formulated by Pawlak concerns the insufficient consideration given to the congregation’s singing in the proposed program. “The moment of the preparation of the gifts is undoubtedly a time dedicated to the manifestation and spreading

<sup>18</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, “Śpiew wiernych wyrazem jedności zgromadzenia,” *Msza Święta* 27 (1971): 278.

<sup>19</sup> Pawlak, “Śpiew wiernych,” 279.



of love for one's neighbor. Therefore, the singing should be communal." While Pawlak acknowledges that it is appropriate to entrust more complex or polyphonic pieces to a vocal ensemble, he argues that when the singing is monophonic and well known, its joint performance by the assembled faithful can emphasize love and fraternal unity.<sup>20</sup>

A particular category of singing assembly is children. In Masses involving their participation, often different means than usual are employed. Based on the document "Directory on Masses with Children," the author emphasizes that the primary role in preparing children for such celebrations belongs to the parents. Through religious education at home, they should initiate the youngest members into the prayer community so that they can later naturally integrate into the liturgical assembly. Catechesis also plays an important role. The author strongly stresses that catechesis should include, among other elements, the teaching of songs and Mass chants, as this facilitates children's active participation in the Eucharistic celebration.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING IN THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE MASS

In the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, published in 1975, the entrance chant is designated as the moment initiating the celebration, replacing the earlier practice of the prayer at the foot of the altar: "The purpose of this song is to open the celebration, intensify the unity of the gathered people, lead their thoughts to the mystery of the season or feast, and accompany the procession of priest and ministers." It is also specified that the chant may be performed alternately by the schola and the people, cantor and people, by the people alone, or by the schola alone. Furthermore, the form in which this should be done is indicated – either by singing an antiphon with a psalm taken from the Gradual or by performing an appropriate hymn. If the chant is not sung, the antiphon is to be read by the congregation or some of its members, the lector, or, finally – after the greeting – the priest himself.<sup>22</sup>

In his discussion of the aforementioned characteristics of the entrance chant, Ireneusz Pawlak reminds readers that this chant marks the beginning of

<sup>20</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Kontrapropozycje," *Msza Święta* 30 (1974): 175.

<sup>21</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Muzyka w Mszach dla dzieci," *Msza Święta* 31 (1975): 173.

<sup>22</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, "General Instruction of the Roman Missal," II editio typica, no. 25, accessed August 6, 2025, [https://archive.cccwater-shed.org/media/pdfs/13/08/26/10-58-44\\_0.pdf](https://archive.cccwater-shed.org/media/pdfs/13/08/26/10-58-44_0.pdf).

the celebration of the rites of the Holy Mass. Since the intonation of the hymn signifies the official start of the liturgy, the author suggests that it may even be appropriate to begin singing before the entrance procession sets off. He regards the recitation of the antiphon as an exception to be used only when necessary. The second function of the entrance chant is to deepen the unity of the Eucharistic community. Pawlak notes that the participants' awareness of themselves as a gathered community largely depends on this particular moment. It is natural for people to sing together during solemn occasions, as communal singing powerfully expresses and reinforces unity. In addressing the third function of the entrance hymn, the reader's attention is drawn to the fact that its text should introduce the theme of the liturgical season or the specific feast of the day. For this reason, the author urges careful selection of hymns to ensure they align with the liturgical context. The final characteristic of the entrance chant is its role in accompanying the entrance procession. To fulfill this purpose, the chant must not be too brief, as it would then fail to contribute effectively to the formation of the liturgical community. However, Pawlak allows for the possibility that the entrance chant may be sung by a choir. He explains that this opening element of the Mass is not reserved exclusively for the assembly: "It may also be performed by a choir on behalf of the faithful, especially since this practice is rather rare – limited primarily to major solemnities," and he adds, "This will not diminish the significance of the chant; on the contrary, it will enrich the repertoire and help the congregation learn to listen to music."<sup>23</sup>

The liturgical renewal enacted after the Second Vatican Council endorsed retaining the *Kyrie* chant following the Penitential Act and linked the two so closely that if one is omitted, the other must also be omitted. According to the regulations issued at that time, because this chant is both a praise and a plea for mercy from God, it should be performed by all the faithful together with the cantor or choir. Typically, each invocation is repeated once; however, to lend the chant a more solemn character, this could be multiplied or the *Kyrie* tropes could be added.<sup>24</sup>

According to Ireneusz Pawlak, it is not excluded that, despite the communal character of the *Kyrie* chant, its performance may occasionally be entrusted to a vocal ensemble in a more elaborate form – particularly in order to preserve older polyphonic and Gregorian compositions and to lend a solemn character to the celebration. In such cases, the participation of the faithful consists in listening to a beautiful musical composition and directing their thoughts toward heaven. Outlining for his readers the full range of *Kyrie* performance options, Pawlak also describes its variant known as the troped *Kyrie*, which may be used

<sup>23</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Śpiewajmy Panu. Na wejście," *Msza Święta* 33 (1977): 137.

<sup>24</sup> *GIRM II* edition, no. 30.

as an independent form of the Penitential Act. Its implementation would positively influence the renewal of the liturgy for the faithful, as the text may be written in reference to the content of a particular liturgical day.<sup>25</sup>

In the liturgical reform carried out after the Second Vatican Council, it was decided that the hymn *Gloria* should be a chant intended for performance by the faithful. It is sung on Sundays outside of Advent and Lent, on solemnities and feasts, as well as during more festive celebrations. It is performed by the entire assembly together, alternatively by the faithful in alternation with a vocal ensemble, or by the ensemble alone.<sup>26</sup>

In his practical explanation of how liturgical legislation should be applied, Ireneusz Pawlak clarifies the detailed implementation of this chant in the three configurations mentioned above. The first configuration—singing by the entire assembly—requires the use of a simple, recitative-style melody. An advantage of the wide available repertoire is the possibility of enriching the liturgy by alternating different melodies. Another way to vary the chant is by dividing the verses between the cantor or priest and the faithful, or between two groups of the faithful. The second configuration for performing the *Gloria* includes simultaneous singing by the schola and the congregation. According to Pawlak, the simplest way to achieve this effect is by using the so-called *falso bordone* technique—simultaneous singing by the schola and the faithful in such a way that the ensemble's voice serves as a harmonic accompaniment to the congregational singing. He lists the advantages of this approach: "It brings a certain liveliness to the singing, and in addition, it allows for longer breathing during the performance of this rather lengthy text. Finally, this method teaches both sides to listen to the music and reflect upon it." The third and final option is to entrust this chant solely to the choir. However, Pawlak cautions against using this approach too frequently, so as not to make it a rule. It should be reserved for solemn occasions in order to enhance the celebration.<sup>27</sup>

During the liturgical reform carried out after the Second Vatican Council— analogously to the entrance chant—it was decided that instead of the offertory antiphon from the Graduale, an appropriate hymn could be sung or an instrumental piece performed solo.<sup>28</sup> The regulations issued in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal at that time specify that this chant should continue at least until the gifts have been placed on the altar. As for performance

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<sup>25</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Śpiewajmy Panu. Panie, zmiłuj się nad nami," *Msza Święta* 33 (1977): 173–174. Zob. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 120.

<sup>26</sup> *GIRM II edition*, no. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Śpiewajmy Panu. Chwała na wysokości Bogu," *Msza Święta* 33 (1977): 208.

<sup>28</sup> *Musicam Sacram*, no. 32, 65.

guidelines, the same principles that apply to the entrance chant should be followed. The same section also notes that if the offertory antiphon is not sung, it should be omitted entirely.<sup>29</sup>

In *Msza Święta*, Rev. Pawlak sets out to answer two questions that may arise in connection with this particular moment of the Eucharist. The first concerns the duration of the offertory chant. He explains that, according to liturgical legislation, the dividing point is the conclusion of the rite – that is, the washing of the priest's hands. However, if the chant sung by the faithful or the choir is still ongoing, the priest is obliged to wait until it has ended before continuing the celebration.<sup>30</sup> The second question the author addresses is what the content of the offertory chant should be. According to the instruction *Musicam Sacram*, every song performed must correspond to the action it accompanies, as well as to the liturgical season or the specific feast being celebrated.<sup>31</sup> Clarifying this directive, Ireneusz Pawlak explains that since the chant in question is connected with the preparation of the gifts – in which the faithful have the opportunity to express their love through action – the selected piece should reflect this character. The chosen composition may also, in line with the instruction, refer to the mystery of the day, the saint being commemorated, or the liturgical season being celebrated.<sup>32</sup>

Through the singing of the *Sanctus*, participants in the liturgy express their identification with the words spoken by the priest in the Preface; for this reason, care should be taken to ensure that it is sung collectively by all those present at the celebration.<sup>33</sup> In his discussion of this part of the Eucharist, Pawlak emphasizes that since the *Sanctus* is a ritual chant, the earlier practice – whereby the priest did not wait for the conclusion of the chant but, having quietly recited the words of the acclamation, proceeded with the Eucharistic Prayer – can no longer be maintained. He also recalls that, although this chant is in principle to be sung by the entire assembly, during more solemn celebrations it may be entrusted to a vocal ensemble. “Of course,” the author notes, “the singing of the choir cannot become the norm, as this would contradict the very essence of a common acclamation [...]; thus, the relevant directive should be applied with great flexibility, and in each specific case it must be determined whether choral singing is appropriate or not.”<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *GIRM II edition*, no. 50.

<sup>30</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, “Śpiewajmy Panu. Śpiew na przygotowanie darów,” *Msza Święta* 34 (1978): 113.

<sup>31</sup> *Musicam Sacram*, no. 32.

<sup>32</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, “Śpiewajmy Panu. Śpiew na przygotowanie darów,” 114.

<sup>33</sup> *Musicam Sacram*, no. 34.

<sup>34</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, “Śpiewajmy Panu. Aklamacja Święty,” *Msza Święta* 34 (1978): 137–138.

During the liturgical renewal carried out after the Second Vatican Council, the eleventh-century form of the *Agnus Dei* was restored in the Mass: the invocation "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" is repeated three Times – twice ending with the words "have mercy on us," and the third time with "grant us peace." However, whenever the breaking of the bread takes longer, the invocation "Lamb of God" may be repeated multiple times, concluding with the petition for peace only at the end. The invocations may be sung or recited by a schola or cantor, and the congregation is to participate by singing the responses.<sup>35</sup>

Referring to the above guidelines, Ireneusz Pawlak explains that the Church permits various forms of performing the "Lamb of God" chant. The most common and fundamental form should be the entire chant sung by the faithful; however, it is permissible for the assembly to sing only the invocations "have mercy on us" and "grant us peace," while the cantor or schola performs the remaining parts.<sup>36</sup>

The Communion chant is addressed in the then-current General Instruction of the Roman Missal, which recalls that permitted chants at this moment of the Mass include: the antiphon from the Roman Gradual with or without the psalm, the antiphon with the psalm from the Simple Gradual, or another hymn approved by the competent authority. As a rule, the selected chant is performed by the choir alone or by the choir or cantor together with the people. The Instruction further specifies that the function of the antiphon or hymn during Communion is to manifest the internal unity of the community, express the joy experienced, and show that the procession is formed by members of the family of God. When singing is omitted, the antiphon is to be recited. This may be done by all the gathered faithful, by some of them, by the lector, or ultimately by the priest after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>37</sup>

Father Pawlak, addressing this topic, refers to the possibility of omitting the Communion chant and instead reciting the antiphon at this moment. However, he insists that this should occur only as an exception. Essentially, as the author explains, this chant should "express the spiritual unity of those receiving Communion, be a manifestation of the joy of the heart, and accompany the procession of the faithful to Holy Communion so that it takes place in a spirit of fraternal love. And only singing can fulfill these tasks."<sup>38</sup>

Referring to the functions of the Communion chant, the author points out that its primary task is to demonstrate the unity of those receiving Communion.

<sup>35</sup> *GIRM II edition*, no. 56e. Zob. *Musicam Sacram*, no. 34.

<sup>36</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Śpiewajmy Panu. Baranku Boży," *Msza Święta* 34 (1978): 170.

<sup>37</sup> *GIRM II edition*, no. 56i.

<sup>38</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Pieśń kościelna śpiewem liturgicznym," *Msza Święta* 26 (1970): 112.

However, he suggests that it would sometimes be beneficial for the chant to be performed by a vocal ensemble, even together with the faithful. "If we were to follow the letter of the law strictly, only those receiving Communion could sing. But that would be nonsense," he explains, emphasizing that the faithful must maintain a moment of silence after receiving Communion anyway. Regarding the second function – the expression of inner joy – he stresses that singing is a natural way to express this feeling and fulfills its role very well in this context. As for the third task of the Communion chant, which is to express the communal character of the procession, he adds that the use of instrumental music, for example on the organ, would also be appropriate. This could be especially applicable when the Communion rite lasts for a longer period.<sup>39</sup>

Common thanksgiving became a new element in the Church's liturgy after the Second Vatican Council. Referring to it, Ireneusz Pawlak explains to readers how worship after Communion should look. "At first glance, it seems to be about collective thanksgiving. However, a closer look into the spirit of this regulation shows [...] that it rather concerns individual prayer," Pawlak emphasizes. Citing the previously mentioned instruction *Tres adhinc annos*, he lists three options foreseen for the time of thanksgiving: sacred silence, the singing of a psalm or hymn of praise, and the recitation of a psalm or prayer of worship. The author explains that silence after Communion differs from other moments of silence in the Mass because it should last longer. The entire assembly remains seated during this silence. Since this form is mentioned first, the author considers it the most important way of worship. The second way to experience thanksgiving is through the singing of a psalm or hymn of praise. The singing may be performed by the entire assembly, possibly divided into choirs, by the cantor together with the faithful, or by the choir alone. Ireneusz Pawlak reminds that despite the communal singing, this prayer retains an individual character. Furthermore, he recommends that in well-formed assemblies such as seminary communities, religious orders, or pastoral groups, the most common form of worship should be an extended period of silence.<sup>40</sup>

Commenting on the hymn of the recessional, a new element introduced into the Mass after the Second Vatican Council, Ireneusz Pawlak notes that due to a misunderstanding of the nature of this moment, it is sometimes interpreted incorrectly. The first criterion, as with other variable parts of the liturgy, is the connection between the song and the action being performed. "Therefore," the author observes, "the singing of this rite should contain encouragement to do good, to lead a better life, and should breathe optimism and hope."

<sup>39</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Śpiewajmy Panu. Śpiewy na Komunię," *Msza Święta* 34 (1978): 210–211.

<sup>40</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Dziękczynienie po komunii św." *Msza Święta* 24 (1968): 250–251.

The author proposes using, at this moment, the final verses of old Polish Mass hymns because – he recalls – there was a lack of appropriate recessional songs at that time. The second option, presented in *Musicam Sacram*, is that the recessional song should refer to the mystery of the day or the particular celebration. Referring to this regulation, the author recommends performing a hymn thematically related to the specific liturgy.<sup>41</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this article was to characterize the singing of the faithful after the Second Vatican Council and to demonstrate its value as a sign and a means of the congregation's active participation in the liturgy. According to post-conciliar liturgical theology, one of the conditions for a fruitful liturgical experience is active participation. The communal singing of the faithful not only expresses the unity among those gathered but also provides the opportunity for this unity to be realized practically.

The analysis shows that the key to proper participation of the faithful in the liturgy is liturgical and musical formation. Its task is to shape in them an attitude of participation characterized by a genuine willingness to take part. Formation should lead not only to the proper observance of existing norms but, above all, to deepening the experience of the liturgy within the entire community.

It is worth noting that, according to Ireneusz Pawlak, a beautiful and fruitful celebration requires thorough preparation of all participants. Celebrating the liturgy without proper awareness and established order can cause harm both to the Church and to the faithful. Without a conscious sense of participation, the sacred time of the Eucharist may be perceived merely as the action of the priest and altar servers. Such a passive spectator attitude can hinder or even make impossible a fruitful experience of the liturgy and the encounter with Christ.

The articles published by Pawlak very often relied on documents issued by the Church. He explained, commented on, and presented these documents in an understandable way, focusing on their practical application. He also frequently encouraged readers to be guided by the spirit of the law. The second pillar of his formation efforts was the history of the liturgy. In many articles, he presented topics from the past of church music, simultaneously showing that these should serve as a starting point for reflections on reform. The language used by Pawlak

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<sup>41</sup> Ireneusz Pawlak, "Śpiewajmy Panu. Śpiewy na zakończenie Mszy Św." *Msza Święta* 35 (1979): 18.



was always simple and clear. However, when necessary, he could address sensitive topics in a direct manner, indicating the attitude that should be adopted.

The topic of the faithful's participation in the liturgy is particularly relevant today, as shaping an attitude of active involvement in the liturgy among the faithful continues to be a pastoral challenge. Emphasizing the role of the gathered assembly's communal singing seems to offer an opportunity to enliven participation and prevent passive attitudes among the faithful. Hence, there is a clear need to remind both priests and the faithful about the importance of the assembly's common singing and to raise awareness of this issue. It is hoped that this will lead each participant toward a more fruitful engagement in the liturgy.

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## IRENEUSZA PAWLAKA KONCEPCJA ŚPIEWU WIERNYCH JAKO ELEMENTU AKTYWNEGO UDZIAŁU W LITURGII

### Streszczenie

Przedmiotem niniejszego artykułu jest zagadnienie śpiewu wiernych w liturgii po Soborze Watykańskim II, który jest znakiem i narzędziem czynnego w niej uczestnictwa. Temat został przedstawiony w oparciu o publikacje ks. Ireneusza Pawlaka (1935–2020), wybitnego polskiego muzykologa, profesora i kompozytora, zamieszczonych na łamach miesięcznika „Msza Święta” w latach 1966–1990. Dokonane w pracy analizy odnosiły się w pierwszej kolejności do śpiewu wiernych w liturgii, do jego znaczenia, zadań i sposobu kształtowania. Widoczne stało się w ten sposób, jak znaczącą rolę ma taki udział obecnych na liturgii. W dalszej natomiast części wskazano, jakie są zadania wspólnego śpiewu w kolejnych momentach Mszy Świętej. Z analizy oraz syntezy źródeł wynika potrzeba wszechstronnej formacji muzycznej wszystkich członków wspólnoty. Odpowiednio wykonywany przez zgromadzenie śpiew jest szansą, aby każdy z obecnych uczynił swoje uczestnictwo w świętych obrzędach czynnym oraz owocnym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** liturgia; odnowa; Msza Święta; Sobór Watykański II; Ireneusz Pawlak