

ST HILDEGARD AND THE MUSIC OF THE COSMOS

In the year 1179, the clergy of the German archdiocese of Mainz engaged in a bitter dispute over a corpse. The specific corpse in question was the body of a man who had been excommunicated, and whom the archdiocesan clergy believed should not be buried in consecrated ground; however, the man made a deathbed confession, received the last rites, and was buried in the cemetery of a local Benedictine abbey in the town of Eibingen. Thus there began a power struggle between the archdiocese and the Benedictine nuns: the prelates of the archdiocese believed that the man remained excommunicate and that his body should be disinterred and removed from the cemetery, while the eighty-year-old abbess believed that the man was properly reconciled to the church and refused to allow the body to be moved. And so the abbey of Eibingen was placed under interdict by the archdiocese: the nuns were forbidden to receive the Eucharist at Mass, and they were ordered to stop singing their daily Office, merely speaking the words of the liturgy instead.

The interdict placed on the abbey did not last for long, and so this is one story like many others in the history of the medieval church: a somewhat disedifying account of a game of chicken being played between a religious order and its local diocese. This story is of interest to us today, though, because the eighty-year-old Benedictine abbess was a saint: Hildegard of Bingen, the famously multitalented nun who is remembered today as a mystic, a theologian, a scientific and medical writer, and as an artist, poet, and composer. A formidable figure like Hildegard was not going to give in easily to what she believed to be an unjust order, and so in response to the interdict she wrote an extraordinary letter to the prelates of Mainz, defending her actions and marshalling all of her considerable theological learning to insist that her community must be allowed to return to participation in the Eucharist and to the singing of the liturgy.

What is interesting in Hildegard's letter, however, is the relative importance that she places on these two things. For twelfth-century Christians, receiving the Eucharist was not an everyday occurrence; lay people might receive the sacrament once a year and Hildegard's own community of nuns, according to her own account, communicated once a month. Today's Catholics are used to being encouraged to receive communion as often as possible, at least weekly and perhaps daily, but this is a relatively modern development associated particularly with the pontificate of Pius X. For churchgoers of Hildegard's time, it was perfectly normal to attend the liturgy without receiving the sacrament oneself; one's normal method of communion with Christ was in silent adoration of his Eucharistic presence, what we would today call a "spiritual communion." So Hildegard would not have experienced a Eucharistic fast of a few months as something extraordinary. She recognizes that her abbey's exclusion from the Eucharist is something unjust, and because she knows her moral theology she is able to pinpoint the nature of that injustice quite precisely. But this section of the letter only takes up one short paragraph. What really exercises Hildegard, what she objects to most strongly, what occupies the three remaining pages of her letter, is the evil of forcing her community to refrain from singing. This is the most urgent matter for her, because for Hildegard a liturgy that can only be spoken, that excludes the possibility of singing, is not just lacking in beauty but actively harmful. For Hildegard, liturgical singing is an echo of the perfect and eternal harmony of the cosmos; when we sing in the liturgy, we sing in union with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, with Mary at her Annunciation, and with all the angels and saints in heaven. To separate ourselves from that harmony is to align ourselves with the devil, who is irrevocably opposed to God and to all musical harmony; the devil cannot sing, and he wishes to prevent others from singing either. And so in the course of setting out her arguments to the archbishop, Hildegard presents us with a rich

and startlingly audacious theology of music, one in which singing is an essential spiritual discipline in our lives as Catholics.

I say that this theology of music is startlingly audacious because Hildegard's priorities, as I have just outlined them, are exactly the opposite of what contemporary Catholics might expect. In our modern age of frequent communion, we place paramount importance on being able physically to receive the Eucharist each time we go to Mass. If this chapel were placed under an interdict that forbade us from receiving the Eucharist at Mass this afternoon, we would rightly be deeply disturbed, and we would not rest until we got to the bottom of things. The loss of liturgical singing, on the other hand, seems like a much less serious matter that can wait until everything else is sorted out. We all know people in our parishes whom we might suspect would be secretly pleased if an interdict came down forbidding all liturgical singing: these are the people who strongly prefer a spoken Mass without music, and who sometimes seem visibly irritated or impatient when a hymn or chant or motet is being sung. Too often music is treated as something merely ornamental, which takes time that could be spent more profitably on something else. I am reminded of a conversation I once overheard between two parishioners about the meaning of the term "solemn Mass": a solemn Mass, this person explained, is "one of those masses where it's 80% music and only 20% the actual Mass." In this understanding, all the hymns and prayers and psalms and verses of Scripture that the Church offers us to sing during the Eucharistic liturgy are mere irrelevant decoration: only when the singing stops for a sermon or for a spoken prayer does the "actual Mass" take place. When this view is stated so boldly we can obviously see that it is wrong, but as modern people it is hard for us to shake off this way of thinking completely. And so Hildegard's theology of music, which ascribes a significance to

singing almost on the same level as the sacraments themselves, seems strange and audacious to us.

St Hildegard of Bingen, however, cannot be dismissed as some eccentric: she is a saint and a Doctor of the Church, declared as such by Pope Benedict in 2012. Pope Francis has also praised St Hildegard on several occasions, and earlier this year he officially added her feast day of September 17 to the universal calendar of the Church. So St Hildegard is a figure who deserves our close attention even when—especially when—her writings challenge our own modern intuitions. But Hildegard's situation also has very clear applicability to our own times. We too have been under a kind of interdict, living through a pandemic in which our access to the Eucharist was interrupted and in which singing was severely restricted along with many of our other everyday activities. We too may have been frustrated by some of the decisions of the authorities: in the early days of the pandemic there was an intense fear of the dangers of virus transmission through singing which more recent research has shown to be greatly exaggerated. But it would be a mistake simply to blame COVID, or to blame the public health officials, for all the challenges that we face as church musicians. As many commentators have noted, the effects of the pandemic have been felt most severely by people who were already living on the economic and social margins: essential workers making minimum wage, immunocompromised patients, elderly residents in long-term-care homes. If liturgical music has suffered such great losses during the pandemic, with horror stories from various parts of North America of church musicians being summarily fired and their choirs allowed to disband permanently, this is in large part because liturgical music was often not properly valued prior to the pandemic. It is here that Hildegard has much to teach us: she offers us the example of a person who obeyed her legitimate authorities during a difficult time, but who used her intellectual gifts to offer a trenchant analysis

of her situation, going back to the first principles of her craft as a musician. Precisely because she was deprived of the opportunity for liturgical singing, she came to understand even more clearly why liturgical singing matters so deeply.

Why, according to Hildegard, does liturgical singing matter? One way of getting at the answer is to ask a related question: why do we cry when we listen to music? Hildegard asks precisely this question in her treatise *Liber vitae meritorum* (The Book of the Rewards of Life), and here is what she says:

But man's soul also has harmony in itself and is like a symphony. As a result, many times when a person hears a symphony, he sends forth a lamentation since he remembers that he was sent out of his fatherland into exile.¹

When we hear music and are moved by it, Hildegard tells us, this is because the sound of the music quite literally resonates with something inside us: we are attracted to the harmony of music because our soul has a harmony of its own. Hildegard means this literally: if the soul is in balance, if it is in proper proportion, if it is directed towards the good, then those qualities are not just morally praiseworthy but musically beautiful. They are expressions of the same order in divine creation that makes audible music sound harmonious. If we know someone whose character and actions are generous and loving and merciful, those qualities are examples of a kind of harmoniousness and order that, if we could only hear it, would make beautiful music.

But of course no one we know on earth is perfectly generous and loving and merciful; we are all fallen, and so the music of the human soul is always imperfect. This is why, for Hildegard, the music that we hear not only echoes the music of our own soul, but it also echoes the music of the cosmos, the harmony of the spheres, the everlasting song of praise of the angels and saints in heaven. Thus whenever we hear music, we are as it were trapped between earth and heaven. We

¹ *Liber vitae meritorum* IV.46, tr. Bruce Hozeski in *The Book of the Rewards of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 202.

recognize a likeness, a congruence, between the harmony of our own souls and the beautiful music that we hear. But at the same time we recognize a dissimilarity, an unlikeness, because neither the harmony of the music nor the harmony within our souls are as beautiful as the harmony in heaven, in which the perfect love and mercy of God are manifested as perfect musical beauty. Thus every time we listen to music we are reminded on the one hand of what we desire most—this perfect love and goodness—and on the other hand of how far away we are from the fulfillment of that desire. And so experiencing a foretaste of a beauty that we cannot yet possess perfectly, we weep. The theologian Denys Turner puts the same insight in modern terms when he writes that “the sadness of music is a sort of sensual nostalgia for what one has caught some glimpse of but cannot yet possess; it is, as it were, a premonition of a premonition.”² Even music that is apparently happy in character seems to possess this kind of sadness: in the quiet joy of a piece by Palestrina or Mozart we experience something of the world as we wish it were, but also know it is not yet so.

What Hildegard is suggesting is that there are always three musical harmonies sounding at the same time whenever music is being sung or played: the actual audible music, the music of the human soul, and the music of heaven. And so behind every musical performance is the great story of creation and fall: the perfect harmony that God brought into being when he created the universe, the dissonance and disharmony created by the moral evil of the Fall, and the restoration and perfection of the original harmony of creation through the coming of Christ. In these terms, it is especially significant that the music of the liturgy becomes more subdued during Advent, this time we find ourselves in right now as we wait for the arrival of Jesus. It is not simply that this is a more penitential season, a time of expectation, although that is certainly true. It’s that

² Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason, and the Existence of God* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 116.

there is something profoundly poignant about experiencing the mystery of the Incarnation as a *musical* event, as an outburst of musical harmony that is all the more impressive when heard against the “quiet silence” of these weeks leading up to the great feast.

This is why Hildegard insists that the greatest singer ever to have lived was Adam, the first human: she writes that “before he sinned, his voice had the sweetness of all musical harmony. Indeed, if he had remained in his original state, the weakness of mortal humanity would not have been able to endure the power and the resonance of his voice.”³ She continues, “For while he was still innocent, before his transgression, his voice blended fully with the voices of the angels in their praise of God... But Adam lost that angelic voice which he had in paradise, for he fell asleep to that knowledge which he possessed before his sin, just as a person on waking up only dimly remembers what he had seen in his dreams.” In Hildegard’s theology, the purpose of the Christian life is to recover that lost harmony represented by Adam’s beautiful voice before his Fall. She writes that:

God, however, restores the souls of the elect to that pristine blessedness by infusing them with the light of truth. And in accordance with his eternal plan, he so devised it that whenever he renews the hearts of many with the pouring out of the prophetic spirit, they might, by means of His interior illumination, regain some of the knowledge which Adam had before he was punished for his sin.

And so the holy prophets, inspired by the Spirit which they had received, were called for this purpose: not only to compose psalms and canticles (by which the hearts of listeners would be inflamed) but also to construct various kinds of musical instruments to enhance these songs of praise with melodic strains. Thereby, both through the form and quality of the instruments, as well as through the meaning of the words which accompany them, those who hear might be taught, as we said above, about inward things, since they have been admonished and aroused by outward things. In such a way, these holy prophets get beyond the music of this exile and recall to mind that divine melody of praise which Adam, in company with the angels, enjoyed in God before his fall.⁴

³ Letter 23, in *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, tr. Joseph L. Baird and Radd K. Ehrman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

What is Hildegard describing here: is this a history of musical composition, or is it a theological account of how music brings about the growth of grace in the human soul? For her, the two things are so intimately intertwined that it is not possible to talk about one without talking about the other. The desire to make music is always connected to a desire to reclaim the music of Paradise, and the desire to imitate Christ and the saints always expresses itself through the creation of audible music. This is why, in Hildegard's theology and in her role as an abbess, music and singing are so closely tied to the cultivation of virtues.

Perhaps some of you have heard recordings of compositions by St Hildegard of Bingen—this music has been very successful in modern performance, but there is an ongoing debate over how this music would have been sung in Hildegard's own time. Her pieces are similar to the older music of Gregorian chant and to the chants being written for the liturgy by other late medieval composers, but there are few indications of how they might have been used in the liturgy, whether at Mass or Vespers or one of the other hours of the Office. There is some evidence that Hildegard saw her musical compositions as a unified cycle of sacred songs, which she sometimes designated with the title *Symphoniae harmoniae celestium revelationum* (Symphony of the Harmony of the Celestial Revelations). One especially interesting theory is that the songs were intended as a part of the training of the young nuns that entered the abbey as novices, a kind of educational program based in sacred music. By singing their abbess's songs praising the persons of the Trinity, Mary, and the saints, the young nuns would develop musical skills and they would learn more about the content of their faith, as well as the qualities that they were to emulate as members of their new community. But Hildegard did not see her songs simply as a pedagogical tool; she hoped that the singing of the chants would not merely teach the young nuns *about* virtue, but actively help them to grow in virtue. The beauty of the music

would inspire the novices to emulate that beauty in their own lives, and it would prepare them for a life oriented largely around the singing of the liturgy each day, chanting the psalms and antiphons and responsories that had inspired Hildegard's own music. Hildegard hoped, in other words, that her young nuns would literally become what they sang.

This desire for the formation of character through music can be seen especially clearly in Hildegard's most famous work, *Ordo virtutum*, or the Play of the Virtues. This musical drama depicts the life of a soul who is tempted and captured by the devil, and how the soul is finally rescued by characters representing the various Virtues: Humility, Faith, Hope, Charity, Mercy, Patience, and so on. What one first notices in hearing this long music drama is that the soul and all the Virtues are portrayed by beautiful singers, but one character is given no music at all: the devil cannot sing, he only shouts. Singing belongs so essentially and inextricably to the life of grace and virtue that it is impossible to imagine the devil making any musical sound; merely by singing at all, the nuns playing the Virtues are symbolically rebuking the devil. But the play, in which the nuns of the community would presumably have taken the various parts, was also a metaphor for the Christian life and particularly for the life of the monastic community. By using music to enact the victory of the virtues and the defeat of the devil, Hildegard's nuns were intended to bring about the kind of community they desired for their abbey: a community dedicated to virtue, united around a common goal, and gifted with a variety of different strengths and skills. At the end of the play, "the devil is bound by all the virtues, just as nuns and monks in community are bound by the Rule and their mode of life to work for each other's fortitude."⁵

⁵ Margot Fassler, "Composer and Dramatist: Melodious Singing and the Freshness of Remorse," in *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World*, ed. Barbara Newman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 174.

This is also why so many of Hildegard's songs are about the saints—in many cases, her chants are about obscure local saints popular in the medieval Rhineland and little known today, like St Disibod, St Rupert, or St Maximinus. Here we might recall the three types of song that Hildegard alludes to in *Liber vitae meritorum*: the audible sound of singing, the harmony within the human soul, and the celestial harmony of heaven. If the goal is to come to share in the harmony of heaven by cultivating the virtues that bring about greater harmony in the soul, then what better way to do this than to invoke and sing about those who lived virtuous lives on earth and who now participate in the harmony of heaven? Pre-eminent among all these saints is Mary, whom Hildegard also depicts as a musician. Mary is traditionally spoken of as the new Eve, the woman who undoes and reverses the sin of her predecessor. Since Hildegard views Adam as the first great human singer, who could sing so beautifully that “the weakness of mortal humanity would not have been able to endure the power and resonance of his voice,” the new Eve is similarly gifted with the fullness of heavenly harmony. In the poem she wrote for her sequence *Ave generosa*, Hildegard addresses Mary, writing that “your womb rejoiced / As from you sounded the whole celestial symphony / For as a virgin you have borne the Son of God.” Mary's Annunciation is here portrayed as the moment that the celestial symphony, unheard on earth since the Fall, sounds audibly once again.

All of this makes it clear how much was at stake for Hildegard when, as an old woman, she saw her abbey placed under interdict and all singing forbidden. To Hildegard, music was not simply an ornament to the liturgy: it was a means of organizing and unifying her community, an audible link to Mary and the saints, a path to growth in virtue, a weapon in the fight against the devil, and an audible foretaste of heaven. And so, in her long letter to the prelates of Mainz, Hildegard does not beat around the bush: she says in as many words that to forbid singing is to

ally oneself with the devil, and that the clergy are risking their souls if they do such a thing without grave reason. I've quoted a number of extracts from this letter, but I'd like to read you the final page in its entirety because it's so hard-hitting, and because it gives you a sense of her style of thought:

[W]hen the devil, humanity's great deceiver, learned that human beings had begun to sing through God's inspiration and, therefore, were being transformed to bring back the sweetness of the songs of heaven, mankind's homeland, he was so terrified at seeing his clever machinations go to ruin that he was greatly tormented. Therefore, he devotes himself continually to thinking up and working out all kinds of wicked contrivances. Thus he never ceases from confounding confession and the sweet beauty of both divine praise and spiritual hymns, eradicating them through wicked suggestions, impure thoughts, or various distractions from the heart of a human being and even from the mouth of the Church itself, wherever he can, through dissension, scandal, or unjust oppression.

Therefore, you and all prelates must exercise the greatest vigilance to clear the air by full and thorough discussion of the justification for such actions before your verdict closes the mouth of any church singing praises to God or suspends it from handling or receiving the divine sacraments. And you must be especially certain that you are drawn to this action out of zeal for God's justice, rather than out of indignation, unjust emotions, or a desire for revenge, and you must always be on your guard not to be circumvented in your decisions by Satan, who drove humanity from celestial harmony and the delights of paradise.

Consider too that just as the body of Jesus Christ was born of the purity of the Virgin Mary through the operation of the Holy Spirit so too the canticle of praise, reflecting celestial harmony, is rooted in the Church through the Holy Spirit. The body is the vestment of the spirit, which has a living voice, and so it is proper for the body, in harmony with the soul, to use its voice to sing praises to God. Whence, in metaphor, the prophetic spirit commands us to praise God with clashing cymbals and cymbals of jubilation, as well as other musical instruments which men of wisdom and zeal have invented, because all arts pertaining to things useful and necessary for mankind have been created by the breath that God sent into man's body. For this reason it is proper that God be praised in all things.

And because sometimes a person sighs and groans at the sound of singing, remembering, as it were, the nature of celestial harmony, the prophet, aware that the soul is symphonic and thoughtfully reflecting on the profound nature of the spirit, urges us in the psalm to confess to the Lord with the harp and to sing a psalm to him with the ten-stringed psaltery. His meaning is that the harp, which is plucked from below, relates to the discipline of the body; the psaltery, which is plucked from above, pertains to the exertion of the spirit; the ten chords, to the fulfillment of the law.

Therefore, those who, without just cause, impose silence on a church and prohibit the singing of

God's praises and those who have on earth unjustly despoiled God of his honor and glory will lose their place among the chorus of angels, unless they have amended their lives through true penitence and humble restitution. Moreover, let those who hold the keys of heaven beware not to open those things which are to be kept closed nor to close those things which are to be kept open, for harsh judgment will fall upon those who rule, unless, as the apostle says, they rule with good judgment.

And I heard a voice saying thus: Who created heaven? God. Who opens heaven to the faithful? God. Who is like him? No one. And so, O men of faith, let none of you resist him or oppose him, lest he fall on you in his might and you have no helper to protect you from his judgment. This time is a womanish time, because the dispensation of God's justice is weak. But the strength of God's justice is exerting itself, a female warrior battling against injustice, so that it might fall defeated.⁶

The one thing that I'm certain of when I read a conclusion like that one is that you and I should never write letters like this to our own priests and bishops. Hildegard could afford to fulminate in this way because of her well-established authority as a religious superior, and her status as a renowned visionary and theological writer who was arguably one of the leading intellectual figures of her time. Those of us who find ourselves in difficult musical situations with less impressive resumes would be better advised to cut our losses and move on. But our own situations are rarely as clear-cut as Hildegard's was. Musicians have faced enormous difficulties and hardships amidst the pandemic, but there is no particular bad guy to blame: some parish communities have weathered the storm better than others, but all of us have had the same experience of navigating confusing and challenging public health restrictions and trying to follow them as best we can. The problems we face as musicians at this moment are distressingly concrete and practical: trying to restart choirs that have been dormant for eighteen months; finding new repertoire that will work with much smaller groups of singers; trying to stop your glasses from fogging up after singing in a mask all day. Many of us are doing the best we can as church musicians out of our love for the work, but often with inadequate compensation and

⁶ Hildegard, Letter 23, 78-79.

without access to proper resources and training. It's easy to imagine that one might come away from a talk like this one and instead of being inspired, being vaguely depressed by the enormous gulf between Hildegard's exalted theology of music and our own struggles in comparative obscurity.

What I'd like to suggest, however, is that the Church is in fact irrevocably committed to something like Hildegard's theology of music. Whether it's the theology of Hildegard's mystical treatises, the rich musical thought of St Augustine, or the Second Vatican Council with its insistence that the Church's musical tradition is "a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art," one finds throughout the Church's history an insistence on the primacy and central importance of music: there is the ideal of the fully sung Mass as the most complete expression of the Church's liturgy, the commendation of spiritual practices such as the singing of the psalter, and the work of Catholic composers who have left an indelible mark on world history precisely through their dedication to the liturgy. When we insist upon the unique importance of music, we're not making a special plea for some eccentric, fringe enthusiasm; we're asking our parishes to follow the developed theology of the Doctors of the Church and the decrees of the ecumenical councils. Hildegard's theology matters to us because her sense of what music means theologically is a kind of benchmark against which we might measure our own use of music in the liturgy, not to mention the place of music in the parish budget.

The historic insistence of the Church on the centrality of music in the liturgy is so strong and so incontrovertible that it leads to a very powerful cognitive dissonance whenever these ideals are not met. If Vatican II is authoritative when it calls music "a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art," then there is no possible excuse for large urban parishes not to have choirs, or to treat their music directors as "independent contractors" rather

than as salaried employees like the other essential staff of the parish—practices that are unfortunately still common in many North American dioceses. These are obvious abuses, but this kind of cognitive dissonance is something that we have all experienced during the course of the pandemic. The Masses that we've experienced since COVID, in which cantors and choirs have been restricted and congregational singing was for a long time forbidden, did not feel normal: there is something chilly, frigid, about a Mass that used to have singing and now has none. Even the most reluctant singers in our own parish are used to responding to prayers with a sung "Amen," and these musical expressions are so deeply embedded in the liturgy itself that it is impossible to stifle them. So there is no time like the present to take stock of our musical practices and perhaps be slightly more ambitious in what we attempt: the experience of having Mass with no congregational singing at all may have opened some eyes and ears to how important music really is in the liturgy, and how much is lost when singing is undervalued or taken for granted. One might begin, if you're not doing so already, by encouraging your priests and congregations to sing the dialogues and responses of the Mass: "The Lord be with you," the Amens, and so on. This is the practice suggested by the Vatican II instruction *Musicam sacram*, which recommended that these dialogues should always be sung before any other sung Mass parts are added. This kind of singing is not especially exciting musically, and many priests are nervous and uncomfortable about doing it, but this more than anything else communicates to the parish that singing is not some kind of supererogatory addition to fill time when nobody is talking, but an inextricable part of the Mass itself. And in the experience of every musician, these responses are the music that every congregation sings best; they are the same every week and they are dead simple, so that they can invite even the most self-conscious and inhibited singer to add their voice to the celestial symphony.

Now, perhaps you agree with everything I've said here but you still think that Hildegard's exaltation of music is a little bit too excessive, a little bit extreme; perhaps you're still shocked that in her letter to the archdiocese of Mainz she writes for pages and pages about the importance of singing but for only one paragraph about the importance of being able to receive the Eucharist. Perhaps after this talk I will receive angry Facebook messages rebuking me for my aestheticism and for the excessive neo-Platonism of Hildegard's musical vision of the cosmos. But besides being a little weird, this would be a misunderstanding of what it is that Hildegard is doing. It's important to recognize that Hildegard's vision of cosmic harmony is not just something that stems from her own background as a musician and from her particular late medieval philosophical commitments: it's a question of faithfulness to the witness of Scripture, since the thing that we know with greatest certainty about the life of the blessed in heaven is that they praise God forever by singing "Holy, holy, holy." This is why at each Mass the priest reminds that we are singing in unison "with angels and archangels... and with all the hosts and powers of heaven." Unless we believe, along with Hildegard, that our audible and earthly music making is a true participation in the eternal harmony of heaven, the Mass is something incomprehensible; all of the prayers of the liturgy insist that what we are doing is not merely giving each one of us individually an opportunity to receive the Eucharist, but offering to God the highest act of praise and adoration and thanksgiving that is possible for us humans, as we will do this afternoon in just a few minutes. If we are properly disposed and attentive at that Mass this afternoon, one of its effects will be to shape us and form us for a time when we will worship God in a very different way. One day, we hope, we will no longer receive the Eucharist or participate in the sacraments because we will see our Lord face to face; but there will never be a day when we cease to sing sacred music.