

E-mail from: SanAntonioCath (2/1/2012 at 8:06 AM CST)

Since I have not received an answer to the E-mail I sent on 13 January 2012, I am attempting to send the same message for the second time.

Dear OCP Publications,

Since October 2011, I have been in communication with Msgr. Richard Hilgartner, the head of the Secretariat of Divine Worship, USCCB. I have written to him about the OCP Glory and Praise Hymnal. This hymnal contains close to 100 pages of Responsorial Psalms with texts re-written by the various composers (many of whom are not Catholic). These texts do not match the Lectionary texts: most only faintly resemble the official text. Here is just one example of what I mean:

Second Sunday of Advent, Year B

Official Church Version

First Psalm Verse:

*I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD—for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.*

Second Sunday of Advent, Year B

OCP "Glory & Praise" Hymnal

First Psalm Verse:

*God, how I long
for the peace you proclaim,
your salvation and glory
near to all who revere your name.*

Text & Music ©1988, Dominic MacAller

The Glory & Praise Hymnal has a USCCB approval in the front cover, but it is not approved by any Bishop. Monsignor Hilgartner has stressed several times that the USCCB approval does NOT extend to the altered versions of the Responsorial Psalm texts mentioned above.

QUESTIONS:

1. Did any local Bishop in the USA approve these versions of the Responsorial Psalms?
2. If so, why was the approval not included in the front cover? Remember that these versions cannot be used without approval from a Bishop, because they are radically altered versions of the official Lectionary texts.
3. If a Bishop did approve these variants of the texts, what is the time limit on these approvals? Or do the approvals last forever?

Sincerely,

K _____

On Wed, Dec 21, 2011 at 3:34 PM, Msgr. Richard Hilgartner <RHilgartner@usccb.org> wrote:

I point out that the designation in hymnals "published with the approval of the Conference of Bishops" applies only to liturgical texts per se, and not to hymnody or other paraphrased texts. Those are subject to the approval of local ecclesiastical authority, e.g., an imprimatur or nihil obstat, which assess the content of texts which are not drawn directly from liturgical books.

E-mail from: OCP Senior Research Editor (2/1/2012 at 1:43 PM PST)

Dear K _____,

Greetings from the Pacific Northwest! I'm sorry you didn't receive a response from your email of 13 January, but I'm unsure as to who among my colleagues received your missive.

I concur with the statements made to you by Monsignor Richard Hilgartner, Executive Director of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship. At the time the hymnal was published, the USCCB designation was made relative to only the ritual texts.

The Committee has always allowed musical settings of paraphrased Psalm texts. We do publish an edition of this hymnal with readings, but the Responsorial Psalm section of the readings is text-only (i.e., not musical settings). In the case of the text-only presentation, we do have the verbatim Psalm texts.

In the case of another of our hymnals, Journey Songs, Second Edition, we do publish an edition with readings and it does include musical settings of the Responsorial Psalms, and since they are placed in the Readings Section of the hymnal, those musical settings are verbatim.

It is also important to note that the USCCB guidelines, Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (issued on November 14, 2007) do stipulate the allowance for paraphrased Psalm settings:

The Responsorial Psalm

155. The Responsorial Psalm follows the first reading. Because it is an integral part of the Liturgy of the Word, and is in effect a reading from Scripture, it has great liturgical and pastoral significance.¹²³ Corresponding to the reading that it follows, the Responsorial Psalm is intended to foster meditation on the Word of God. Its musical setting should aid in this, being careful not to overshadow the other readings.¹²⁴

156. "As a rule the Responsorial Psalm should be sung."¹²⁵ Preferably, the Psalm is sung responsorially: "the psalmist, or cantor of the psalm, sings the psalm verses and the whole congregation joins in by singing the response."¹²⁶ If this is not possible, the Psalm is sung completely without an intervening response by the community.

157. The proper or seasonal Responsorial Psalm from the Lectionary for Mass, with the congregation singing the response, is to be preferred to the gradual from the Graduale Romanum.¹²⁷ When the Latin gradual is sung in directum (straight through) by choir alone, the congregation should be given a vernacular translation.

158. Because the Psalm is properly a form of sung prayer, "every means available in each individual culture is to be employed"¹²⁸ in fostering the singing of the Psalm at Mass, including the extraordinary options provided by the Lectionary for Mass. In addition to the proper or seasonal Psalm in the Lectionary, the Responsorial Psalm may also be taken from the Graduale Romanum or the Graduale Simplex, or it may be an antiphon and psalm from another collection of the psalms and antiphons, including psalms arranged in paraphrase or in metrical form, providing that they have been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the diocesan bishop.

159. Songs or hymns that do not at least paraphrase a psalm may never be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm.¹²⁹

160. If it is not possible for the Psalm to be sung, the response alone may be sung, while the lector reads the intervening verses of the Psalm "in a manner conducive to meditation on the word of God."¹³⁰

123 LFM, no. 19-22; see GIRM, no. 61.

124 See LFM, no. 19.

125 LFM, no. 20.

126 LFM, no. 20.

127 "The Responsorial Psalm should correspond to each reading and should, as a rule, be taken from the Lectionary" (GIRM, no. 61; see LFM, nos. 20, 89).

128 LFM, no. 21

129 See GIRM, no. 61.

130 LFM, no. 22; see LFM, no. 21.

As to the direct questions you presented in your email:

1. Did any local Bishop in the USA approve these versions of the Responsorial Psalms?

No, as paraphrases are clearly allowed in the music section of a worship resource.

2. If so, why was the approval not included in the front cover? Remember that these versions cannot be used without approval from a Bishop, because they are radically altered versions of the official Lectionary texts.

As stated by Monsignor Hilgartner, the approval applied only to the ritual texts. Again, paraphrased Psalm texts are allowed – as long as they are not in the “Readings Section” of a worship resource.

3. If a Bishop did approve these variants of the texts, what is the time limit on these approvals? Or do the approvals last forever?

There is no “time limit” on these allowed paraphrased settings.

In closing, it is important to stipulate that the copyright lines of the musical settings always clearly state the source(s) and/or copyright ownership of the Psalm setting’s text.

Wishing you all the best, I am

With regards,

B _____
Senior Research Editor
Oregon Catholic Press
ocp.org

E-mail from: SanAntonioCath (2/1/2012 at 12:24 PM CST)

Dear B _____,

I thank you for your message.

From what you have said, I understand that the Glory & Praise Hymnal cannot be used during the Catholic Mass because (as you have said **below**) there is no Bishop's approval for the paraphrased Psalms.

As you know, the General Instruction for the Roman Missal states clearly (section 61):

In the Dioceses of the United States of America, instead of the Psalm assigned in the Lectionary, there may be sung either the Responsorial Gradual from the Graduale Romanum, or the Responsorial Psalm or the Alleluia Psalm from the Graduale Simplex, as described in these books, or an antiphon and Psalm from another collection of Psalms and antiphons, including Psalms arranged in metrical form, **providing that they have been approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.**

Thank you for your help in this area.

Sincerely,

K _____

E-mail from: OCP Senior Research Editor (2/1/2012 at 2:53 PM PDT)

To clarify, the paraphrased settings of Psalm texts can be used in other parts of the Mass, e.g., at Preparation of the Gifts, Communion Procession, and/or Closing.

Relative to your statement about GIRM's ecclesiastical approval stipulation, that is directly focused on the musical settings of Responsorial Psalms during the Liturgy of the Word.

Granted, under some directives that have been written by the US Bishops' Conference and sent to Rome (where they are awaiting approval), the diocesan bishop of the territory where a publishing house is located will have oversight relative to song texts. At his discretion, he can assign and/or delegate the review process to people of his choosing. In the case of us at OCP, we are a not-for-profit liturgical publisher in the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, and we have song texts reviewed by theologians at Mount Angel Abbey/Seminary (here in Oregon).

It is somewhat interesting that this approval process only seems to apply to musical settings published by legitimate liturgical publishers. If aspiring composers self-publishes their work, it is subject to no ecclesiastical review process.

Regards,

B _____
Senior Research Editor
Oregon Catholic Press
ocp.org