

# *Reflecting the Multicultural Face of God*

By Sara Mankus

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said that “11 o’clock Sunday morning...is the most segregated hour in Christian America” (Cone 137). This division of worship along racial and ethnic lines still exists in most Christian churches today. In his book, *One Bread, One Body*, C. Michael Hawn poses the question: “Is there room for my neighbor at the table?” (Hawn 1). For many years, I think that churches have struggled with this idea and question, as diversity becomes more widespread. How do churches deal with multiple races, cultures and languages? Therefore, how is it possible to make worship welcoming to all?

All my life I have attended a Catholic church where a diverse population worships. As the world, the Catholic Church and even Cincinnati, Ohio become more diverse racially and ethnically, multiculturalism is in the forefront. Many churches, including mine, St. Leo the Great, are faced with the challenge of becoming multicultural parishes and doing it in a way so that everyone who attends these churches feels at home, specifically during the Mass and other forms of liturgical worship. Therefore, how can these parishes create an effective multicultural atmosphere through liturgical worship? Is it possible? Can it be authentic? This paper explores these questions through: my personal experience of St. Leo in practice and in liturgy; the theory of multiculturalism and its history throughout the Church, with a focus on African and Latin American culture and worship; an analysis of this theory and practice; and what the future holds for the multicultural, Catholic Christian church.

## **A Case Study: Worshipping in a Multicultural Setting**

St. Leo the Great Catholic Church, located in the now predominantly African-American neighborhood of North Fairmount in Cincinnati, Ohio, was founded by German immigrants in November 1886 ([www.saint-leo.org](http://www.saint-leo.org)). Through the years, the parish has survived and flourished, though not without some difficulties. Even with a declining attendance as more people moved to the suburbs and with the threat of closure in recent decades, St. Leo has remained a beacon of hope in a poor urban neighborhood. This is reflected in the parish's mission statement which says St. Leo is "to be a welcoming Catholic community, grounded in Eucharistic prayer, celebrating our diversity, and sharing your love through ministries of serving and being present, in our urban neighborhoods, while focusing on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy" ([www.saint-leo.org](http://www.saint-leo.org)). Currently, St. Leo, besides being a place of Saturday and Sunday worship, also offers a food pantry for the neighborhood, classes in English as a Second Language, tutoring, a Burundi women's group, a community garden, prayer wall ministry, parish nurse ministry and a safe place where people in the neighborhood can come.

Today, there are about 50 families that are registered as parishioners, though there are dozens more (mostly Guatemalans) that are not registered. During October 2014, almost 300 attended both the Saturday and Sunday Masses each weekend. The parish newsletter goes out to about 900 people a month, including parishioners, benefactors and people in the church's neighborhood.

In its 128 years, St. Leo has seen thousands of diverse peoples come through its doors. When I was growing up and attending church there in the 1980s and 1990s, the population of the parish was mostly a mix of white European-Americans and African-Americans. Therefore, starting from a young age, I have been able to see how people from different backgrounds and races can come together to worship. It's an idea that is a part of me, sewn into the fabric of my

being. Since my youth, the population of the parish has drastically changed. While there are still many whites and African-Americans, the majority of those who worship at St. Leo are immigrants from Guatemala and refugees who escaped genocide from Burundi and the Congo. Most of those who come to St. Leo do not speak English as their first language, if they can even speak it at all. Hence, with such a diverse population that speaks Spanish (the primary language of Guatemala) or Kirundi (the primary language of Burundi) but not English fluently, how is it possible to worship in a multicultural way that makes everyone the one Body of Christ?

On the weekends, St. Leo offers two Masses: a Saturday night Mass in Spanish and a Sunday morning Mass that is usually in English and Kirundi. (Because I play flute at the Sunday Mass and help plan the music for it once a month, I rarely get to go to the Spanish Mass. Therefore, most of what I describe will relate to the Sunday Mass.) Here is what happens during a “typical” Sunday Mass at St. Leo:

Opening Song/Processional Song: English (usually from a songbook)

Gloria: English (words in Archdiocesan red book)

First Reading: English

Responsorial Psalm: sung in English

Second Reading: Kirundi (with explanation in English before reading)

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia

Gospel: English

Homily: English

Offertory Song/Preparation of the Gifts Song: Kirundi

Holy, Mystery of Faith, Amen: English (words in red book)

Our Father: spoken in native language—English, Spanish, Kirundi simultaneously

Lamb of God: English (words in red book)

Communion Song: Kirundi

Closing Song/Recessional Song: English (usually from a songbook)

The English songs usually come from one of the hymnals we have—older editions of *Gather Comprehensive* or *Lead Me, Guide Me*—so the congregants can follow along and actively sing and participate with us. Through the years we have learned that it helps to hold up

the book from which the songs come as well as say the numbers and have them posted. That way, even those who don't speak or really read English can follow the songs to the best of their ability. The choir at St. Leo's is small, with a piano, flute, four or five singers and occasionally a guitar.

The Kirundi songs are led by the women's choir, in a cappella style, accompanied by the beats of hand-drums. (Though, during Lent, no drums are used.) For those that don't speak Kirundi, participation includes clapping or humming the tune, as most of the melodies are simple. (Similarly, I know that when I plan the music for the Mass, I try to think of songs that would be inclusive so that those who don't speak English could clap or hum along. I want everyone to be able to participate in the music.)

St. Leo uses a Missellette that includes the Sunday readings, prayers and songs in English and Spanish. In the past five years, a Kirundi Missellette has also been created by St. Leo's pastoral associate that includes the readings in Kirundi and English. Currently, the second reading is being read in Kirundi, though the first reading has also been read in Kirundi. By including English in both the Spanish and Kirundi Missellettes, it has allowed non-English speakers to learn some English—I often see them following the readings in English as well as in their native language.

On Sunday, the Ordinary parts of the Mass are said or sung in English, including all of the prayers. There has been increased participation by all cultures in singing and saying these parts of the Mass. "Alleluia" and "Amen" are universal in any language, so these parts of the Mass usually receive the most participation in singing, though the other parts of the Mass, especially the Gloria and Holy, Holy are close behind. And even though I'm not especially fond

of the changes that were made to the Mass, it might have actually helped St. Leo because everyone—English, Spanish or Kirundi-speaking—had to learn all the new words together.

The Our Father is led in English, though everyone says it in his or her own native tongue. The sign of peace is also in the native language. It really is neat to hear “amahoro,” “la paz,” and “peace” during this time. (And sometimes the English peace comes from a Burundian or Guatemalan, while the “la paz” or “amahoro” come from an English speaker.)

The lectors, Eucharist distributors, ushers, servers/acolytes are from all cultures. The Body and Blood of Christ is the same no matter which language is spoken. That is the same with the readings or songs. The Mass is the same in all cultures, even if the language is different.

One of the best parts of my youth was the CCD classes. It was during those classes that I made some of my good friends at church, and it was through them that I was exposed to people of different backgrounds. For many years, St. Leo didn't have enough children to have CCD classes. A few years ago, through the hard work of many volunteers, the Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) was restarted. It now runs from September to May, with up to 40-50 kids coming some weeks. The Children's Liturgy of the Word is taught in English, but children from all cultural backgrounds attend, even those who may have gone to the Spanish Mass the night before.

While anyone, no matter which language they speak, is welcome at the Saturday or Sunday Masses, there are more occasions where all the cultures come together for one combined service on the weekend. However, our real attempts at planning multicultural liturgies are at Easter and Christmas. For these services, songs and readings are in English, Kirundi and Spanish (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> reading in Spanish, Psalm in English, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in Kirundi, Gospel in English). Oftentimes, we will do one song in both English and Spanish, though we have done all three

languages in one song—the Litany of Saints at the Easter Vigil and *Angels We Have Heard on High* at Christmas (see Appendix 1 and 2). Additionally, there may be one song sung completely in Spanish and one song completely in Kirundi.

One of the many challenges of planning liturgies and songs in multiple languages is communicating and understanding each other. Because my Spanish and Kirundi aren't very good and others' English is not great, it can be really difficult to know whether everyone is on the same page. And this leads to another challenge: practicing and making sure people are going to follow through. There have been many times that something will be planned and the English-speaking music leaders think that everything is taken care of only to find out right before the service that someone couldn't make it because of work, illness or another commitment. Therefore, that Preparation of the Gifts song that was going to be in Spanish now has to be in English or Kirundi.

Combined services also occur outside the Mass setting. For many years, the parish has hosted an Epiphany evening prayer (Vespers) service, followed by an international potluck with ethnic foods (where I hope that I don't accidentally eat fish heads or goat!) After all, it is at Epiphany where the psalm says: "Lord, every nation on earth will adore you" (Psalm 72:11). This past year, we had our first every prayer service on Pentecost, followed by a potluck. As the birthday of the Church, Pentecost celebrates diversity—the many parts of the one Body of Christ.

Besides Easter and Christmas, all cultures often come together in the celebration of the sacraments of initiation—baptism, communion and confirmation. Baptisms in all languages are taking place during the Sunday Mass. Whether the baptism is done in English, Spanish (or in the past, Swahili), the sacrament is the same in all languages and cultures. However, each culture has unique traditions that are then incorporated into the service. For instance, the Burundi women's

choir will often sing a traditional song after a baptism as the newly baptized infant or child is presented to the community. The white garment of baptism can also have different traditions for each culture, with the Guatemalans usually dressing baptized males in suits.

In April 2014, 12 people were confirmed—11 Burundian teenagers and one Guatemalan adult. The sponsors of the confirmation candidates were almost all from the parish and they were very diverse, with Anglo and Burundian sponsors. Additionally, a traditional Burundi song after communion led to dancing and overall praise from everyone. Though I didn't understand the words, I could tell it was a spirit-filled song of praise. It truly was a "God moment" where I couldn't believe that I worship in such a diverse parish.

Because St. Leo doesn't have a school, I went to grade school at a suburban, middle class, mostly white, parish. While I was there, whenever someone who was different—in race, ethnicity or social class—was seen in films we would watch in class or in person, many kids would laugh. I remember being offended by that, perhaps because I felt like I was different and never fit in with the other kids because I lived in a different neighborhood. Most of the kids I went to school with were used to everyone being the same and having the same life experience. They didn't have experiences with those who were different. My experience in grade school was one of two worlds. I was going to a school that lacked diversity, and I was going to a church on Sunday that was very diverse. And I was more comfortable in the more diverse setting.

I think that's why the idea of diversity is important to me. Specifically, "unity in diversity" reflects the diversity of the Church—we are many parts but the one Body of Christ. Everyone brings his or her unique gifts to Mass—whether it is playing an instrument, or singing, or reading or distributing or just being a present in the congregation, praying. All these gifts

come together to form the one Body of Christ during Mass. My pastor, Fr. Jim, always says the goal each week for Mass is to “pray well,” even if one doesn’t understand the language.

I believe that it is this idea of striving to “pray well” that contributes to St. Leo being a family—that one Body of Christ. St. Leo appears to have become a “home” for both the Burundians and the Guatemalans, where they feel comfortable. Faith, religion and Mass are important and central in both cultures. Therefore, finding a church which would be a place they could put down roots after years of instability was vital. The Guatemalans have a Saturday night prayer group based on Charismatic Catholic Renewal. Additionally, they usually meet throughout the week for praise, worship and instruction. Many of the Burundians take ESL classes at the parish and many of the women meet on Thursdays. The parish pastoral council has representatives of all languages and cultures, which provides a safe place for addressing concerns the Burundian and Guatemalan communities may have.

I believe that it has been an adjustment for both the Burundians and the Guatemalans to be in a parish setting because the way a parish is structured and run in the U.S. is much different than back in their home countries. However, I see the children being especially comfortable in the parish. They will wander up to almost anyone during Mass. I loved it when Joni would come over to me while I was playing my flute during Mass. Erich loves to try and play the piano (which isn’t good when while we’re singing a song!) Often, someone will get loose and wander up on the altar while mom or dad is distributing or reading. When I was growing up, I had (and still have) many church moms. I hope that I’m becoming a church mom to many of the children who are now going to St. Leo. And my twin sons have many church moms, thus once again demonstrating we are all one family in the Body of Christ.



At my wedding, most of the parish came, whether they were formally invited or not. (Of course, my mom was worried about whether there would be enough food because she didn't know how many people would really come.) Both the Guatemalans and the Burundians came because they considered me family. In their cultures, you just come to weddings to celebrate a family member—no invitations are needed. Additionally, an African dance was performed at my wedding reception because they wanted to do something special for me (and my husband). We were touched by the dance and the singing that accompanied it.

I am learning more about the Burundian understanding of unity and family because my boys' godmother is originally from Burundi. Because of that, we had a gathering where both families became one, as is custom in her culture. All of her family—her husband and kids—are now part of my family and vice versa. I was really touched when her husband, who doesn't speak much English, said that my sons were now his sons. We are all one family. And we at St. Leo are all one church family.

## **THEORY OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CHURCH**

### **Scriptural Witness to Unity in Diversity**

Almost since its birth, the Mass has been a window into the Church's mission of being the one Body of Christ. The liturgy may reflect what a specific culture or parish is like and how they view the Church. Therefore, the argument could be made that a liturgy that celebrates diversity while also showing unity would uphold the Church's mission.

Scripture is full of examples of how the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church and the early disciples envisioned the Church of Jesus. Paul, in particular, talks about the many parts of the one Body of Christ. All have gifts to contribute in the one Spirit. This is the focus of 1 Corinthians 12:4-31:

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Paul continues, “As a body is though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Thus, according to Paul, all, no matter what the ethnicity or culture, are integral to the one Body of Christ. Everyone has gifts to contribute.

Paul doesn't limit his idea of the one Body of Christ to Corinthians. He also talks about it in his letters to the Galatians and Ephesians. From Galatians: “For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28). Faith in Jesus knows no boundaries. And from Ephesians: “One body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6). Earlier in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes: “So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Ideally, the Church of Jesus is a place where all are welcome. However, the challenge in the early days of the Church, as now, is how do different people come together to form the one

Body of Christ? How can there be unity in diversity? As demonstrated by Paul's writings about Jews and Gentiles, coming together into one church appeared problematic, given everyone's different backgrounds. Thus, this idea of diversity is as old as the early church. How do you deal with many cultures and languages when preaching the gospel? The Acts of the Apostles and Jesus' actions in the Gospels provide a glimpse into how unity in diversity is possible.

The first Pentecost mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles provides a clue: through the Spirit, all will be able to understand the word of God and see God, no matter the culture. Acts says:

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language... "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God." (Acts 2:4-11).

I can attest that, because of the format of the Catholic Mass, it is easy to respond in one's own native tongue, even if not everything is understood. For instance, we will have people responding to English prayers in Kirundi and Spanish or responding in English to a reading spoken in Kirundi.

In the Gospels, Jesus also was welcoming to the outcast and the sinner, demonstrating that his church should be welcoming to all. In Jesus' time, as well as now, much revolves around the meal. During Mass, sharing the Eucharist with the entire community is the climax of the service. In theory, everyone in the Body of Christ should be welcomed to receive the Body of Christ. The Eucharist is an extension of the "table fellowship tradition" of Jesus' time (Rausch 87). It was at meals where Jesus told his parables, forgave sinners and brought outcasts together.

By including those considered different from the norm, “Jesus proclaimed in sign the participation of all in the reign of God. God’s reign is inclusive; no one is excluded” (Rausch 88). For sharing “a meal with someone in the Middle East, even today, is a sign of communion” (Rausch 87). By modeling table fellowship, Jesus shows us today how we should celebrate Mass by welcoming all, loving those in need.

The first Pentecost, where the Spirit allowed everyone to understand the disciples’ message in their own language, was the model of what the “ideal” church of Jesus should be. And many of the home churches of the early centuries of the church retained that model. As the Church became more centralized in Rome, multicultural churches gradually faded. Cincinnati neighborhoods are full of Catholic churches where one ethnicity or race—whether Irish, German, Italian, black or white—worshipped. For centuries, the commonly accepted belief was that all cultures would eventually assimilate to the dominant culture in religious, social and professional life, which was of Anglo-European origin. A “melting pot” would occur. Hawn says that this model is outdated, and he proposes a different model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church, one of a “cultural mosaic” where “each culture reflects the diverse palette of the One who created all creatures” (Hawn 4). In this mosaic model, each small part—each culture—has a role to play in forming and creating the Body of Christ. One of the ways this is done is through worship. Hawn says, “True worship should enable worshipers to become transformed from being separate cliques to being the body of Christ” (Hawn 7). Slowly, more churches, through necessity and sometimes by choice, are becoming multiracial and multicultural, eliminating this “melting pot” philosophy. These parishes are going back to the model of the Pentecost of the early church and of Jesus’ table fellowship where all peoples are welcome to worship together.

## **Vatican II and other Church documents**

In the Catholic Church, the groundwork for today's multicultural worship in parishes was laid during Vatican II, which ushered in changes (and new challenges) to the liturgy. New documents had to be written to address these changes, with special attention paid to the role of music in the Mass, especially in non-Western countries. Written in 1963, article 119 of *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) addresses the role of liturgy and liturgical music in "mission lands," and how both should be adapted: "In certain parts of the world, especially mission lands, people have their own musical traditions and these play a great part in their religious and social life. Thus,...due importance is to be attached to their music and a suitable place given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius" (CSL article 119). It continues: "Therefore,...every effort should be made to see that they become competent in promoting the traditional music of the people both in schools and in sacred services as far as may be practical" (CSL article 119). This article supports the use of traditional instruments such as the African drum as well as songs in languages such as Kirundi or Spanish during the Mass.

Other documents also address music and cultural heritage. Published by the United States Bishops in 1982, articles 54 and 55 of *Liturgical Music Today* say: "...the rich diversity of the cultural heritage of the many people of our country [the United States] today must be recognized, fostered and celebrated. The United States of America is a nation of nations, a country in which people speak many tongues, live their lives in diverse ways, celebrate events in song and music in the folkways of their cultural, ethnic and racial roots" (*Liturgical Music Today* article 54). And "[I]iturgical music today must be as diverse and multicultural as the members of the assembly. Pastors and musicians must encourage not only the use of traditional music of other

languages, but also the composition of new liturgical music appropriate to various cultures. Likewise the great musical gifts of the Hispanic, Black and other ethnic communities in the Church should enrich the whole Church in the United States in a dialogue of cultures” (*Liturgical Music Today* article 55).

It seems as if the leaders crafting the documents of Vatican II realized that diversity in the Church was going to be critical to the future of the Church itself. What to do about different cultures had to be addressed. It’s an ongoing process that started in the 1960s and is continuing 50 years later. And diversity in the Church may be more important now than ever before since the Church is growing more in Africa and Latin America than anywhere else in the world. Each culture has something to contribute to the Church, making it more and more the one Body of Christ. I believe that an effort needs to be made by all—whether in a multicultural parish or not—to encourage diversity and to incorporate different musical styles into the liturgy. For diversity reflects the history of the U.S. and the Church itself.

While the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and *Liturgical Music Today* were written many decades ago, the leaders of the Church still are responding to multiculturalism and the liturgy with new documents from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as well as others being published.

*Embracing the Multicultural Face of God* was put out by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church in 2010. It is made up of five subcommittees, including Hispanic Affairs, African American Affairs and Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT). The reasons the bishops wrote the document are numerous. First, “Knowledge, attitudes and skills that effectively foster unity in diversity must be nurtured among our leadership and the faithful in general.” (USCCB 1) Leaders in all areas of

Church life have to be open to diversity. Second, “For the Church unity in diversity is a requirement of catholicity, one of the marks of the Church. This is of special importance today because of globalization, migration and the interdependence of people in our country and throughout the world.” (USCCB 1) The bishops continue, “Immigrant youth and the children of immigrants are the hope of the Church now and for decades to come.” (USCCB 1) For the Church to survive in the U.S. during modern times, it needs to reach out to immigrants or it risks becoming left behind in this global world. As Pope Benedict XVI said, when talking about the U.S. Catholic Church, “...conscious of its rich diversity, the Catholic community in [the U.S.] has come to appreciate ever more fully the importance of each individual and group offering its own particular gifts to the whole” (USCCB 1, citing from Pope Benedict XVI homily April 17, 2008). Hence, there are many parts in the one Body of Christ.

The Church has a “...goal of bringing all the culturally and racially diverse communities, including European Americans, into a fuller participation in the faith, life and evangelizing mission of the Church” (USCCB 2). The Church wants active participation by all in the Church’s mission as well as in liturgy. When it comes to diversity in the Church and the world, the bishops say: “The experience of diversity is therefore more characteristic of our times and brings with it serious challenges and great opportunities” (USCCB 2). The world is more diverse and therefore the Church, by default, is going to be more diverse as well. Part of the mission of Jesus was to teach all people. After all, the meaning of “catholic” is “universal” (USCCB 2). Thus, the mission of the Church is “to evangelize...[it]is centered on the encounter of faith with cultures and on the promotion of justice” (USCCB 2). It is a relationship that is characterized by dialogue: “In this process the Church both gives from its treasure of faith and receives from the

distinctive humanity of each and every culture” (USCCB 2). It’s both a passive and active relationship where learning from each other occurs.

A more recent document put out by the USCCB in 2012 is *Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers*. It reiterates many of the points of *Embracing the Multicultural Face of God*, but it provides five modules for training leaders in the Church in various intercultural/multicultural areas via workshops. The guide talks about the “recognition of cultural diversity” (one of the priorities of USCCB for 2008-11). It provides a mystical and theological grounding as well as a reminder that diversity is part of Church’s mission and identity: the “Church’s concern with diversity not just as a practical matter but as something integral to the Church’s very identity and mission” (USCCB ix). Furthermore, it says that understanding cultural diversity is necessary for evangelization (USCCB ix).

The document itself emerged out of the Cultural Diversity Network Convocation held at Notre Dame in 2010 where leaders from all cultural backgrounds came together to share their stories (USCCB ix). For any place where there are multiple cultures, it is important for people to share their stories as was the case at Notre Dame as it helps to lead to understanding. “Each community was eager to share its stories....While a simple procedure, this was the key to beginning the delicate process of intercultural encounter in an inclusive, effective way” (USCCB x). More and more of “today’s urban and suburban parishes are becoming ‘shared’ or multicultural parishes” where understanding needs to occur (USCCB xiii). Again, this document reinforces the idea of a two-way relationship occurring between peoples of multiple cultures. Thus, with this diversity in many parishes, it is more difficult for the traditional national or single ethnic parish model to be maintained.



Another document, *Liturgy in a Culturally Diverse Community: A Guide Towards Understanding*, was published by Mark Francis, C.S.V, in 2012. It, too, reinforces USCCB and various documents of Church's mission to welcome people of all cultures: "Welcoming the stranger is thus intrinsic to the nature of the church itself and bears witness to its fidelity to the gospel" (Francis 1, citing from "The Love of Christ toward Migrants"). Francis further talks about diversity and intercultural liturgy becoming more of a necessity (Francis 3). The Church has to move away from 11:00 Sunday morning being "the most segregated hour in America" because diversity is the reality of the future.

To me, more than any other document, Francis' guide has more relevance to my parish of St. Leo, given our population and situation. Multicultural, multilingual and intercultural worship must be flexible because it is constantly evolving and changing (Francis 5). "Worship in a multicultural community—like worship in every Christian community—will always be a work in progress" (Francis 25). In planning multicultural liturgies, Francis says, the "goal of planning such celebrations is assisting a diverse assembly to find its unity in Christ rather than merely showcasing cultural difference" (Francis 4). The liturgy should promote wanting to be one Body of Christ and "full, conscious, active participation" of people without being a show (Francis 4). Francis points out that saying Mass in multiple languages doesn't make liturgy multicultural (Francis 6). Rather, a multicultural liturgy "will employ not only the different languages of the assembly, but use the various signs and symbols that spring from a particular culture's interpretation of their Catholic faith" (Francis 6). Thus, it is more than just language, but also music, art, active participation and other rituals that make the liturgy multicultural.

Similar to a multicultural liturgy is an intercultural liturgy. This Mass is both multilingual and multicultural but also "the various cultural groups of the parish work[ing] with each other at

preparing the various parts they would later celebrate together” (Francis 6). For instance, at St. Leo’s, we try to do this for Christmas and Easter Masses and other special occasions during the year, especially through the music—“Angels We Have Heard on High” is sung in three languages at Christmas, thus making us “bi-musical” or “tri-musical” (Francis 16). In an intercultural liturgy, the goal is to get everyone involved in the different liturgical ministries—from reading to music to distributing the Eucharist (Francis 11). This goes back to everyone actively participating in the liturgy. Additionally, liturgical planners want to get people involved in saying and responding to the prayers at Mass even if it is in a different language. Francis raises the question: Do worship aids help do this? “Those from oral cultures—such as many parts of rural Central and South America—tend not to use participating aids even if provided in their own language” (Francis 12). I tend to agree with him. We don’t use worship aids often at St. Leo’s. In fact, many bulletin inserts that have been translated into Spanish aren’t used. This is probably because there are many of our parishioners from Guatemala and Burundi who aren’t able to read and write in their own language, let alone English. As mentioned before, I have noticed that more people are singing the ordinary parts of the Mass, which are in English, as well as saying the prayers in English, probably because they have heard them enough times now they are able to participate.

Francis believes that the ultimate goal of multicultural liturgy is: “Did we do what was in our power to provide the opportunity for all our brothers and sisters in Christ to give thanks and praise God in Jesus Christ within our common Catholic tradition?” (Francis 25). I think that a multicultural liturgy needs to encourage active, full participation of all people so that all have the opportunity to “pray well.”

The challenges of praying well in a multilingual and multicultural liturgy stem from Vatican II, during which the Mass was encouraged to be said in the vernacular language of the people and not in Latin as had been the tradition for centuries. This meant that the Mass could be said entirely in English, French, Spanish or Kirundi. As Karl Rahner explained in *Theological Interpretation of Vatican II*: “Latin had its origins in secular life and there became the common standard language of educated people. It was *for this reason* and not really for any other that it became the language of the liturgy in the Western Church and remained so long after it had lost its importance elsewhere. But, as the language of a small and particular cultural sphere, Latin could not be the language of a world-Church” (Rahner 80-81). Rahner argued that Latin was the language of the elite, not of the common, everyday people. He appeared to believe that by making the music and prayers of the Mass in the vernacular, it would help the Church to become a church that is open to diversity. He writes:

In the light of the Church’s unity and the theological continuity of Christian worship there will always be an ultimate liturgical unity behind the regional liturgies. But, as a result of the diversity of liturgical languages, there will be a necessary and irreversible process of development of a variety of liturgies,...In the long run the liturgy of the Church as a whole will not simply be the liturgy of the Roman church in translation, but a unity in the variety of regional liturgies, each of which will have its own peculiar character which will not consist merely in its language (Rahner 92).

While Vatican II opened up the Mass to being said in the vernacular, other cultural characteristics have been and will continue to be infused into the liturgy in addition to the language change. Thus, diverse liturgies will emerge from this.

However, some argue that Latin and chant can in fact be a way to unite people of diverse cultures. In contrast to Rahner, in the book *Sacred Treasure*, Joseph Swain looks at the history of Catholic music. He begins his book by looking at the documents from Vatican II that addressed liturgical music, emphasizing what he considers to be the biggest change: “it championed the

active participation of the congregation in liturgical music and discouraged any liturgical music that could not accommodate congregational singing” (Swain 23). He believes this has been misinterpreted to allow for musicians to introduce folk-style songs and songs that the congregation could easily sing in the vernacular as well as guitars and other instruments into the service (Swain 47). He further points out that the documents of Vatican II didn’t want Latin to totally disappear from the music of the liturgy and the use of native music in “mission lands” had to have “suitable roles” (Swain 25).

However, while “musical inculturation is therefore a necessary and potentially bounteous consequence of evangelization itself,” Swain clarifies, “...when we remember that every culture is flawed, it becomes obvious that musical inculturation cannot be the mere adoption of local styles, fitted to a vernacular translation of the Mass” (Swain 277, 279). He continues, the “limits of inculturating liturgical music are to be found in the nature of the liturgy itself” (Swain 279). If it is problematic, then, to adapt different cultural music styles to the Mass, is there any style of music that would bring unity to the Church? Swain advocates that plainchant is neutral music (since most people don’t know it) that could be used everywhere around the world (Swain 294). He says, “plainchant...culturally speaking, from the present day, it is a neutral music, immanently worthy and yet a stranger to all. In this regard, it has something owned by no folk music anywhere: intrinsic liturgical value without the cultural or nationalistic mark that alienates outsiders” (Swain 294). Thus, according to Swain, plainchant would then unite the Church amidst its diversity.

But Rahner would probably disagree with Swain about the use of Latin, seeing it as an obstacle to unity. Rather, when Rahner talks about using the vernacular language in Mass, he is envisioning and encouraging the Church to become a world-Church, meeting people where they

are by using their native language during the liturgy. He says, "...the Second Vatican Council is the beginning of a tentative approach by the church to the discovery and official realization of itself as *world-Church*" (Rahner 78). In a sense, the Church was rediscovering Jesus' vision of being a place where all are welcome.

As part of becoming a global Church that reaches all cultures, participants in Vatican II had to ask: should what works in Europe during the liturgy be imposed on other Christian, Catholic cultures in Africa or Latin America? (Rahner 79) Or can their cultures be allowed to be incorporated into the Mass? This is central to the idea of inculturation which states that "the Gospel needs to be presented to any given culture in terms intelligible to that culture and allowed to grow up in the 'soil' of that culture; God is already present and active there" (Traub 257). Inculturation was used by missionaries, especially Jesuit ones, in Africa and Asia when they brought Christianity to those continents. Rahner asks, "Have not the Roman Congregations always had the mentality of a centralized bureaucracy, claiming to know what is best everywhere in the world for the service of the Kingdom of God and the salvation of souls and do not their decisions appear shockingly naïve, based as they are on the assumption that the Roman or Italian mentality is the obvious standard of judgment?" (Rahner 79) He continues, "Must the marital morality of the Masai in East Africa be substantially no more than a repetition of the morality of European Christianity or would it not be possible for an African chief, even if he is a Christian, to live in the style of the Patriarch Abraham? Must the Eucharist be celebrated even in Alaska with wine from grape?" (Rahner 79) Even forty-plus years ago, it appears that Rahner was advocating that inculturation can and should happen in a world-church. Because with all the different cultures present in the world, how can there not be diversity in worship?

With Vatican II, the Church had to transform from being European-centric to this world-Church. In “Die Jesuiten und die Zukunft: Anlässlich eines historischen Datums,” Rahner writes: “Yet a transformation of this kind is necessary if the Church does not want to remain the Church of the peasant and petit-bourgeois classes particular to late European modernity, with ever decreasing membership, but instead to become a Church for the kind of society that has a future” (Rahner 171 *Spiritual Writings*). The Church has to continue to not remain static as it further becomes a world-Church, especially in today’s world. It has to remain open to inculturation as it grows in non-European countries and local cultures and customs are incorporated into the Mass. For “God is ever greater (and therefore also, if you like, ever smaller) than culture, scholarship, Church, pope, and anything institutional, and must not be mistaken for any of these” (Rahner 170). God is greater than the institution of the Church; God is greatest of all.

This is especially true when speaking of inculturation. “None of us can say how exactly, with what terminology, under what new aspects, the ancient message of Christianity must be proclaimed in the future in Asia, Africa, the Islamic regions, perhaps also South America, in order to make this message really present everywhere in the world. The other peoples and cultures must slowly find this out for themselves...” (Rahner 87). The Church can’t force anyone to believe. Rather, inculturation asks to see where God already is present.

## **SPECIFIC CULTURES AND WORSHIP STYLES**

### **African**

Christianity is fast-growing on the African continent. The books *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* by A.E. Orobator, *Liberating the African Soul: Comparing African and Western Christian Music and Worship Styles* by Felix Muchimba, and *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* by Laurenti Magesa focus on different aspects of African

Christianity. However, I believe all these books, at some level, are examining the idea of identity that is present at the various levels of African Christianity. This includes: one's identity as an African Christian; the process of inculturation; and worship and music.

Both Orobator and Muchimba emphasize the importance of being an "African Christian" not a "Christian African." Christianity in Africa has to be viewed from the perspective of being an African Christian. Orobator talks about how he has written his book "as an *African Christian*" (Orobator x). To him, it is possible to be both African and Christian at the same time: "This book is thus also an invitation to explore the compatibility between Christian faith and African cultures" (Orobator xi). He continues, it is "...impossible for me to separate talking about God from the practice of my faith...My prayer as an African derives from my experience of God in the various circumstances of life" (Orobator xi). Muchimba reinforces Orobator's idea of being an African Christian. He says, "If Christianity's claim to be universal is to be believed, then it is not Africa that must be Christianized, but Christianity that must be Africanized. Africanizing Christianity is not a matter of taking the traditional customs of African culture and making the best ones fit into Christianity" (Muchimba 26). Rather, he argues, "It's about starting from the reality of the African context and seeing how the gospel message can become leaven to it. It's about being an African Christian and not a Christian African" (Muchimba 26). Thus, to me, when talking about Christianity in Africa, it appears vital to remember that identifying oneself as an African is just as important as being a Christian. The two can't be separated. I think that one example of this African Christian identity relates to the community.

All three authors talk about how, in Africa, people identify themselves as part of the larger community rather than individually as is common in the West. Magesa says, "in the African worldview...the main characteristic of the human person is not individuation but

relatedness: the ‘person’ is a project and for it to flower into the ‘human’—which is the goal—it has to relate to other persons in order to form a community” (Magesa 80). This communal identity extends to all aspects of life, especially the African Christian’s religious life. First and foremost, African Christians see the “Church as the Family of God” (Orobator 86). It is a church built on love that is welcoming to all: “There is a *home* and a *place* of belonging for everyone in the extended family of God, from which nobody is excluded” (Orobator 89). The church is a place of hospitality. And in this church, songs and worship style reflect the idea of community. As Muchimba says, when call and response songs are used during worship, to an African Christian, these songs of dialogue “reinforce community identity” (Muchimba 38). This is because “when Africans make music, a spirit of community is created and leads the Christian into worship” (Muchimba 38). Even spirituality and the sacraments are reflective of the African Christian communal identity. Thus reconciliation, often seen as an individual and private matter throughout most of western Christianity, is a communal act in Africa: “The communal nature of African societies and the perceived communal effects of wrongdoing make it necessary to symbolize reconciliation as a communal act” (Magesa 229). And while it is important for the church community to share in celebrating the sacraments, the real celebration is at home with family and other members of the community.

It is only within the last 50 years that the Catholic Church and other Christian missionaries have encouraged African Christians to incorporate their African identities into their Christian lives through the process of inculturation. Magesa says, “Inculturation is understood to be the process whereby the faith already embodied in one culture encounters another culture” (Magesa 5). Inculturation attempts to find where God is already present within a culture (which is what Rahner advocated). Thus, in Africa, God is not new to Africans, but Jesus is. Orobator



sums it up two ways, "...the belief in God is native to Africa. God is not a stranger to Africa" (Orobator 19). And "for Africans, God is everywhere. We encounter God everywhere" (Orobator 22). The issue is how to understand Jesus. In response to this need some theologians have identified Jesus as ancestor or proto-ancestor as a way of incorporating Jesus into the lives of Africans (Magesa 194, 260). By trying to identify Jesus in this way, these theologians are intersecting Christology with ecclesiology (which could make the Vatican nervous).

Magesa provides case studies of inculturation. He says that in Tanzania, for church leaders, "inculturation is primarily about living the message of Christ or the Gospel" and successful inculturation creates a "relationship between the Christian faith and culture" (Magesa 38). For the laity, inculturation is the "use of specific cultural elements in specific areas of Christian life" such as the liturgy (Magesa 39-40). For both church leaders and the laity, it appears to be important to keep and include elements of the African culture as part of their Christian faith. Yet the seven sacraments fail to address some aspects of African life (Magesa 52). For many, this includes the importance of healing and ancestor rites in the African culture. Thus, many Catholics in Africa will have separate ceremonies outside of the church where they honor their ancestors or remove curses (Magesa 53). These Africans don't see themselves as being any less Catholic or Christian because they are participating in part of their African culture that the Church doesn't incorporate.

Furthermore, both Orobator and Magesa relate inculturation as being incarnational, or taking on the flesh of a new culture. Magesa believes, "If inculturation as incarnation by definition accepts the identity of human groups and cultures—indeed of every human person as a unique creature of God—then diversity is a given and cannot be reduced to monism without injury to individuals or social groups..." (Magesa 257). For Orobator, "just like the Incarnation,

inculturation is a relational term: it involves an encounter between two realities” (Orobator 129). In true inculturation, a transformation will occur where both cultures learn from each other. According to Magesa, “True inculturation is a deep experience in the life of the individual and the community that occurs when there is a constant search for identification between gospel and culture, and when there is a mutual correction and adjustment between them” (Magesa 144-45). Thus, no one culture should dominate in the process of inculturation, and there should be both an active and passive relationship between cultures.

What aspects of African life/identity could enhance Christianity in Africa? Magesa provides a long list, but one way that both he and Muchimba believe inculturation is often very visible is through worship and music. African Christians are able to experience and express God, Jesus and their faith this way—it is part of their identity as African Christians. This is why it is important for those who are not African to understand African music and worship for inculturation purposes: “When people can understand the language, the culture, the music and the music heritage of another society, then they can begin to express ideas in the same way within that culture, or at least understand why the people worship as they do” (Muchimba 59).

Specifically, Muchimba says that “worship, simply put, means ‘worth-ship.’ God is worthy of our worship” (Muchimba 28). Magesa says that “worship in African religiosity implies the ‘real’ presence of God, either in person or (more often) through the ancestors and other spiritual powers” (Magesa 203). The liturgy is the main form of worship for most Christians. And the “liturgy sees the Christian community ‘at sacred play’” (Magesa 205). It is at the liturgy where Africans are able to make use of traditional dance, movements, music, song and instruments such as drums to express their faith.

In Africa, "...singing is just as important to congregational worship as preaching" (Muchimba 46-47). Due to the many oral cultures in Africa, the music that is sung at worship services has to be very singable. Muchimba says, "...most praise songs composed by African artists have three basic qualities: a singable melody, a danceable rhythm, and a meaningful text" (Muchimba 41). And while instruments such as guitar or piano or organ are becoming more popular in certain areas, it is the drum that is the instrument of choice in Africa. The different drums and beats of the drums are reflective of the oral culture and are used in many different ceremonies, both sacred and secular (Muchimba 64). It's almost as if the rhythms and beats of the drums are ingrained in Africans from their birth. Because of this, in worship, "the use of the drum [is] symbolic of (thunderous) divine power and its effect on the African psyche and emotions have as a whole not been superseded. In fact, in the African context, the drum reveals divine power" (Magesa 206).

For Magesa, it's not only the drums that are important to incorporate into worship, but African dance, movements and gestures should also be included. He believes that dance in the liturgy, contrary to some people's beliefs, does not distract from the worship. In fact, it enhances it. As Magesa argues, and I agree, "Dancing in the context of authentic African worship is not a spectacle, a display, a show, an act of entertainment; it is an integral part of worship in which all worshipers participate" (Magesa 207). Furthermore, Magesa believes that, because gestures have different meanings in different cultures, perhaps more African gestures should be included in the liturgy (Magesa 212-14). To him these traditional gestures would only enhance the worship experience of African Christians and would be a step to true inculturation.

In an interview about the liturgy in Africa, Marceline H., a member of St. Leo originally from Burundi and a singer in the Burundi women's choir, reinforces the idea of the importance

of dancing, movement, singing and playing drums during worship services. She said that every week there is dancing and singing at the end of Mass, not just occasionally as has been done here in the U.S. (such as at the Confirmation Mass or at Christmas when the children dance the gifts up at offertory). However, during Lent, drums are not used because Lent is a sad time for the Church; drums return during Holy Week. In Africa, drumming, dancing, music and the Mass go hand and hand; you can't separate them.

When talking to Marceline, she also told me of the importance of New Year's in Africa. On that day everyone in Burundi and other African countries goes to church, then they go home to eat with their families. But the celebration actually begins on New Year's Eve when everyone stays up and is out singing and thanking God for the past year and the new one. Many of the Burundians celebrate their birthdays on New Year's day instead of during the year.

### **Latin American**

Like Africans, the challenge for many Hispanics is to maintain their identity and culture while starting a new life in the U.S. Hispanics are the fastest growing group of Catholics with a mix of first generation immigrants who speak mostly Spanish and subsequent generations who may or may not speak Spanish as their first language. According to the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs, Hispanics make up more than 35% of all Catholics in the U.S., accounting for most of the growth—71%--of the Church since 1960 (USCCB 3).

The historical background of Hispanic Catholicism and Christianity in the United States and Latin America goes back centuries. Many Spanish-speaking Catholics lived in the West before it was part of the U.S. Therefore, they were Catholic even before they were Americans (Matovina 15). Spanish-speaking and Hispanic Catholics have been in U.S. territory since the beginning of the 1500s: "Spanish-speaking Catholics have lived in what is now the United States

for twice as long as the nation has existed” (Matovina 7). Thus, Hispanic Catholicism is not necessarily a new phenomenon in the U.S. as it is rooted in the past before certain areas were part of the U.S.

To understand Hispanic Catholicism in the U.S. today, it is important to look at Christianity and Catholicism in Latin America because that is where many of today’s first generation Hispanics immigrants are from. Like in the U.S., Catholicism in Latin America also traces its history back centuries. Spanish missionaries were brought over to convert “natives” to Christianity/Catholicism (I see a parallel between missionaries in Latin America trying to “convert” natives with those trying to convert Africans to Christianity centuries later). Two faces of Christianity emerged in Latin America. “Thus, almost from its outset, the Church in Latin America had two faces. The dominant face was the one that justified what was being done in the name of evangelization” (González and González 4). The other face of Christianity in Latin America was one where “[t]hose who protested against injustice—particularly against injustice in the name of Christianity” or “prophetic protest” (González and González 4). Hence, a complex relationship between Christianity and the people was the result: “...Christianity in Latin America was often ambivalent on matters of justice, freedom and the social order” (González and González 298). The Church seemed to justify the forceful method of converting people to Christianity while ignoring the injustices between the rich and the poor, the government and the people that were taking place daily.

In Latin American countries, Christianity is important in daily life experiences, outside of the institutional Church: “...it is clear that as Christianity established itself in Latin America, it was not limited to the official church and its teachings or even to the religious practices and devotions recommended to the laity by the clergy but actually combined in a variety of ways

with other religious practices and beliefs” (González and González 7). Thus, worship and what was taught in a parish setting were only a small part of the life of Latin American Christians. Furthermore, there is a history of things being led by the laity because of a scarcity of clergy and ordained (González and González 298-300).

Constant change is a theme in Latin American Christianity: “a thread that runs throughout the entire history of Christianity in Latin America is the need for constant change” (González and González 300). Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador frequently talked about how the Church couldn’t remain static. In his *Second Pastoral Letter*, Romero writes: “The church can be church only so long as it goes on being the Body of Christ. Its mission will be authentic only so long as it is the mission of Jesus in the new situations, the new circumstances, of history” (Romero 70). For many Latin Americans, change includes immigrating to the U.S. and other places due to economic disparities, political chaos, violence (González and González 304). [Though the U.S. decided who could seek asylum based on its foreign policy (González and González 304)]. With the increased numbers of Latinos living in the U.S., it is now the Catholic Church here that has to change, thus continuing the theme of constant change for Latin American Christianity.

There are many different approaches and models that can be used when addressing Hispanic worship and ministry. One is the “national parish dynamic” model (Matovina 50). In this model “...Latinos attempt to establish and nurture structures of Catholic life that enable them to move from, at best, feeling hospitality in someone’s church to a sense of homecoming in a church that is their own” (Matovina 50). This may include keeping the Mass in Spanish as well as having Spanish ministries and traditions from their home countries. An idea of creating a sense of identity and belonging is important where “ongoing contact augments the desire at the

core of the national parish dynamic: a faith community that is resonant with one's identity and belonging" (Matovina 53). Additionally, "...God's house is not holy just because all are welcome. God's house is holy because all belong as valued members of the household. The national parish dynamic among Latinos, which, from all indications will persist into the foreseeable future, is yet another step in the long process to Catholic faith communities in a pluralistic church and society" (Matovina 55). This is similar as to what was done by first generation immigrants to the United States from Europe in 19<sup>th</sup> century where every ethnicity had its own neighborhood parish. Both then and now, they had to address whether to retain their native culture or to partially or completely integrate into U.S. culture. The national parish dynamic model appears to advocate keeping ethnicities from interacting with those of different backgrounds. But questions exist about subsequent generations who might not speak Spanish—how are their needs addressed? Additionally, Hispanic ministry does not equal Spanish-speaking only ministry. How can Hispanic ministry be both multigenerational and multilingual? (which are questions raised by Daniel Rodriguez in *A Future for the Latino Church*)

Another approach to Hispanic worship and ministry is the idea of an integrated approach, which focuses on the idea of inculturation/interculturalization: "...the key to inculturation lies in the Church's capacity to discover a unity of faith diversely expressed through the symbolic structures and social practices of a specific culture" (Ospino 86-87). As Matovina explains, "...a central and long-standing feature of U.S. Catholicism [is] the varied attempts to incorporate diverse groups into a unified body of faith" (Matovina 43). It appears that the U.S. Catholic Church really wants to live out the ideas of one Body of Christ and unity in diversity, where all are welcome to worship together. The hope is that integration will occur, maybe not with the first generation, but through subsequent generations ["integration through separation" (Matovina

48)]. Furthermore, Christian discipleship dictates that all should be included in the Body of Christ: "...for Catholics, the incorporation of newcomers is a demand that Christian discipleship requires" (Matovina 65). The disciple of Jesus is to be welcoming to the outsider.

But the integration model of worship is occurring at the same time as the national parish dynamic: "What is most distinctive about Latinos as a group within U.S. Catholicism is that, while they evidence both the national parish dynamic and the tendency to integrate as did European Catholics, in their case *both* dynamics are taking place concurrently over a more extended period of time" (Ospino 46). Latinos aren't necessarily favoring one model over another, but both may be happening at once, within the same city or perhaps the same parish. However, there are benefits of integration: "When vital Hispanic ministries are integrated into the wider Church, they enable Latinos to both receive from and contribute to U.S. Catholicism" (Ospino 47). It is once again the idea of peoples and cultures being able to learn from each other. It is both a passive and active relationship and experience.

### **Leadership, small groups and popular religiosity in Latino parishes**

Most of the leadership in Hispanic worship communities has been at a local level with lay leaders. There have been efforts to move Hispanic ministry from local, lay-led level to a national level, beginning in the 1960s and 70s, with Encuentro started in 1972 (Ospino 37). This first, and subsequent, Encuentros (Hispanic Pastoral Encounters) are designed to create pastoral plans for Hispanic communities in the U.S., as well as train leaders to implement these plans (Matovina 76). Matovina says that it is important to work on identifying and training leaders on all levels—lay, clergy and religious (Matovina 135).

Small groups have a large role in any Latino worship community, especially "small base ecclesial communities" (González and González 249). As mentioned before, lay leaders are



numerous and play an integral role because of the lack of clergy in Latin America. Therefore, there are often home-based communities as well as communities that meet at the parish. These small groups are as important in shaping Hispanic faith life as the Mass: “The Bishops underscore that the epicenter of Hispanic Catholicism and Hispanic Catholic ministries is the home and extended family, the apostolic movements along with other small ecclesial communities and the parish” (Matovina 101). I know that this is true at St. Leo where there are many Spanish-speaking small groups (based on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal) that meet at all times at church and away from church. It is in these small groups where sacrament preparation, Bible teaching and other faith formation often takes place. The lay leaders play a prominent role because “in the framework of this Latino/a ecclesiology, all of the members of the community are recognized as equal and all share in the mission of Jesus Christ” (Ospino 93). Not just the clergy and priests are leaders, but there are also lay leaders who are in charge because in Hispanic Catholicism all baptized have a role.

Thus, in Latin America because a lot of faith formation takes place in the home setting, home religion and spiritual practices are important: “...one reason why popular religiosity has been such a sustaining force is because it has emerged and been fostered in a cultural context that has heretofore been primarily Catholic and thus where all sacramental dimensions of its drama and beauty could be unleashed” (Ospino ed. 135). As in Africa, the traditions of the home are combined with the traditions of the Church. Popular religiosity reflects that much of faith formation takes place at home rather than church because “in Latin America liturgy has often been the realm of the clergy and popular religion the realm of the people” (Ospino 135).

With the popular religiosity tradition, what does this mean for liturgy/parish life? According to Raúl Gómez-Ruíz, “The liturgy as the foundation of Hispanic *mística* and thus the

starting point of ministry among Hispanics in the U.S. has yet to be fully examined and appreciated” (Ospino 132). The liturgy is important, but because of past experiences of limited access to Mass, popular religiosity and home based groups can be more prominent than the liturgy. Thus, when Hispanic immigrants come to U.S., they find a role reversal between liturgy, popular religiosity and small groups: “Moreover, unlike other Spanish-speaking countries around the world, the main contact our people have with their Catholic faith in the U.S. is at the Mass in their local parishes and not the streets filled with numerous periodic devotional events” (Ospino 137). The Catholic Church in the U.S. is more parish-based rather than home-based. Therefore, “[i]f one wants to touch base with one’s identity as a Hispanic Catholic or deepen one’s faith in the U.S. context, one generally has to go to Mass” (Ospino 139). Hispanics in the U.S. have to find a way to “combine” popular religiosity and liturgy (Ospino 141).

Pedro B., a member of St. Leo and a leader of one of the Guatemalan music groups talked to me about traditions in Guatemala. There, as in most of Latin America, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 is a very important feast. Pedro also spoke of the importance of All Saints’ Day. For this feast day, a novena is said for all the saints and prayers are said for one’s family. He further talked about how people gather together through all of Holy Week, not just during the Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil as is common in the U.S.

Pedro also mentioned the important roles small groups play in Guatemala. The small groups come together for the large feasts such as December 12 and All Saints. “Celulas” are different small groups in neighborhoods that meet on different days, but come together to pray and worship (on Saturdays in the U.S.) and on major feast days. At St. Leo’s, all the small

groups do come together in the summer for Cultural Fest. On this day, the Guatemalan groups celebrate the anniversary of coming to St. Leo's through worship, music and food.

### **Vision of the Multicultural Face of God**

Ideally, the Church of today would model the 1<sup>st</sup> century Church that is presented in scripture where all are welcome. Every Sunday would be like Pentecost, with all participating in the Mass even if the language is not always understood. The liturgy would unite people into the one Body of Christ when all receive the one Body of Christ. And ideally at St. Leo's, the combining of choirs that happens at both Easter and Christmas would happen weekly.

But St. Leo is not alone in trying to figure out how to worship with a diverse congregation. Multicultural worship is becoming a reality in many churches in the United States as the country becomes more and more diverse, and many are looking at the effectiveness of multicultural churches. The books *One Bread, One Body* by C. Michael Hawn and *United by Faith* by Curtiss DeYoung, Michael Emerson, George Yancey and Karen Chai Kim examine multiculturalism in churches and whether multiracial/multicultural worship is the ideal model of church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hawn lists four models of worship that are typically present in today's churches: culturally uniform worship, worship through cultural assimilation, culturally open worship and worship in cultural partnership (Hawn 9). He believes that the last model is the ideal model—one where churches move toward culturally conscious worship. It goes back to Hawn's mosaic model that was mentioned before: "Each fragment of the mosaic has its own beauty but is also enriched by its relationship to the whole....Worship that emanates from this diverse body of believers is greater than the sum of its parts. The mosaic of a culturally diverse congregation in worship reflects the face of God from whom all cultures come" (Hawn 12). Thus, there is unity in diversity.

Hawn looks at the role musicians and music have in creating multicultural worship. He believes in the idea of a “primary musical presider in culturally conscious worship” which he calls the “enlivener” whose job is to “engage people” (Hawn 116). This enlivener has many tasks, beginning with “bridg[ing] the gap between the established choir (choral ensemble) and the choir of the whole—those in the pew—so that all may join together in praise of God” (Hawn 116). Thus, there should be active participation of the people in the music, singing and worship since the congregation is the “primary choir of worship” (Hawn 117). Other roles for the enlivener include teaching, relating the music to the broader worship experience and embodying the songs that are taught through possible movement and dance (Hawn 117, 121). To me, it seems that the enlivener’s job is to carry out one of the facets of Vatican II—to have the people actively participate in the liturgy. And while I know that it can be a challenge to choose and then lead music for a multicultural congregation, I have also seen the way music during a worship service is able to unite diverse peoples into the one Body of Christ.

Hawn looks at strategies that churches can implement if they are interested in creating culturally conscious worship. He wants the idea of Pentecost to be renewed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Throughout the book, he looks to the past—at the life of Jesus, and the church of the first disciples—as a model for today’s church. He says, “...the Spirit call Christians to build a new community around Christ that follows the model presented in Galatians 3:27-29. Such a community does not show preference for cultural distinctions; does not show partiality according to social background; nor does it favor one gender over another” (Hawn 142). Justo González summarizes it well: “The church is multicultural by birth” (González xiv). Therefore, what Hawn and others are proposing is not new, but, rather, it returns the church to its roots.

Like *One Bread, One Body, United by Faith* talks about the importance of looking at the Church in the first century as a model for the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The authors spend the first part of the book looking at the early church, beginning with Jesus' ministry. They say that Jesus wanted the synagogue to be a "house of prayer for all nations" (DeYoung et al 19). Furthermore, Jesus was inclusive, from the choosing of his apostles and disciples to eating with the sinners and outcasts (DeYoung et al 16). They believe that "the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth began and ended with a worldview and mission that were inclusive" (DeYoung et al 14).

But the story of inclusiveness only starts with Jesus' life and mission. It continues in the Acts of the Apostles with Pentecost. The authors of *United by Faith* echo Justo González's introduction to *One Bread, One Body*, when they say: "The Church was multicultural and multilingual from the first moment of its existence" (DeYoung et al 22). The early Christians may have been divided by different ethnicities, languages and cultures, but they were all united by their belief in Jesus Christ. In fact, common belief in Jesus helped to reconcile Jews and Gentiles: "This Jesus movement brought a Gospel that reconciled the differences and tensions often experienced in relationships between Jews and Gentiles" (DeYoung et al 26).

Even with this history of the early Church being very diverse and multicultural, many Christian churches throughout the United States remain segregated and dominated by one race or ethnicity. How is it possible to change this? The authors propose some ideas. The first one they suggest is changing one's worldview and looking at the world from a global perspective as well as stepping out of one's "comfort" zone and experiencing a new way to worship (DeYoung et al 150). They say, "According to the biblical narrative, a change in our theological world view

occurs when we encounter the Spirit of God and acquire a fresh view of God's intentions for our world" (DeYoung et al 151).

The second idea is to have clergy and laity believe in and teach a "theology of oneness" where, as Paul says in Galatians, there are no Gentiles or Jews, men or women (DeYoung et al 152, 158). But even more, "not only must oneness be taught, it must also be experienced" through worship (DeYoung et al 158). The authors think that "the experience of multiracial, multicultural worship deepens one's soul commitment to reconciliation" (DeYoung et al 159). In fact, "For many who do engage in worship experiences that unite people, the potency is so intoxicating (in a good way) that they feel something missing when they worship in uniracial settings" (DeYoung et al 159). I agree with them, as this has been my own personal experience of growing up with multiracial and multicultural worship. Therefore, DeYoung et al suggest: "Are what we call multiracial congregations today a hoped-for outcome of Jesus' life work?" (DeYoung et al 10).

The authors of *United by Faith* present three categories to describe congregational culture and racial integration: assimilated multiracial congregation, pluralist multiracial congregation, and integrated multiracial congregation (DeYoung et al 165). It is this last model—integrated multiracial congregation—that the authors support as being the ideal model of church and worship. If this way of worship is to happen, though, a transformation must occur: "It is our belief that a truly multiracial congregation requires a *transformation* of congregational culture" (DeYoung et al 168). They continue, "In our opinion, a truly effective multiracial congregation not only reflects aspects of the cultures represented by congregation members, but it reflects a *new* and *unique* culture that transcends the worldly cultures" (DeYoung et al 169). In a sense, a new culture and a new way to worship that unites people would be created. In the end, to me, it

appears that the churches described by these books as well as St. Leo are trying to find ways to bring “unity in diversity”, and doing it in both an active and passive way where all learn from each other. However, there are many challenges to this vision of church.

### **Challenges to the Multicultural Church: The Gap Between Theory and Practice**

At St. Leo, the one of the biggest challenges to unity in diversity is language; many people are not educated in their own language, which makes it even more difficult to learn an entirely new language (English). This is especially true of the first generation of immigrants as opposed to the next generation of children who are learning English in school. And while many are becoming U.S. citizens, that does not mean that their English skills are great. Communication is a challenge, especially when planning music and multicultural services. (It was even a challenge trying to interview Marceline and Pedro and phrasing the questions in a way that they could easily understand). That is why at St. Leo we try to communicate announcements in English, Kirundi and Spanish so all may understand. And this is usually done orally during Mass because bulletin inserts in Spanish or Kirundi are useless if people can't read them.

Another challenge is transportation and getting people to Mass and other places on time. More people do drive and own cars than in years past but many still do not. And those that do drive often run on “African” or “Latin American” time which could be 15-20 minutes later than Mass starts or an event can start. In theory Mass starts at 10:30, but most people don't arrive until 10:40, for a variety of reasons. Additionally, something such as a time change, which most people easily adapt to, can affect who comes to Mass.

As noted above, many Guatemalans and Burundians are learning about parish life and being a parishioner in a new country. This means understanding things such as collection envelopes and parish pastoral councils, which other parishes take for granted. With parish

council, it has been important to find leaders that truly represent all cultures. In some respects, at St. Leo's we're having to organize ourselves in our own, local multicultural setting (i.e. parish pastoral council) before we could even think of sending leaders for more intensive training on multiculturalism. And it has taken more than five years for us as a parish to reach this point. It's not something, for us, that can realistically happen in a year or two, especially since most people struggle to survive on a day-to-day basis.

Many of St. Leo's parishioners are living day-to-day in a poor, violent neighborhood. Some are trying to buy homes, but, because of lack of money and documentation status, it is very difficult to purchase homes. Most don't qualify for mortgages, so they are paying in cash, which also limits where one can buy. And due to the energy it takes to try and survive daily, getting follow through from many people can be difficult. They can't necessarily know what their availability will be next month for a special service, let alone next week for Mass. Plan B (or C or D!) is always needed.

Finally, besides having monetarily poor parishioners, St. Leo is an urban parish that doesn't have much money. As much as we may like to have a paid worship coordinator, or as Hawn puts it, an enlivener, like suburban parishes, it probably won't happen any time soon. (Though, we have received a grant that would help the music ministers to learn more multilingual and multicultural songs). Volunteer leaders from all ethnicities have to work together to plan combined services. Usually, it is the English speakers that bridge the gap between the Guatemalans and the Burundians, though that is starting to change. We all have to work together if we are going to pray well at Mass.



## **The Future of the Multicultural Church: Lessons Learned and Going Forth**

A multicultural church is always an ongoing process. I think that the Church really is trying to make an effort to train people in cultural diversity. After all, it does go back to the beginning of the Church with Jesus, Paul and the apostles preaching to all cultures. It is part of Church's mission and identity. But I see the trainings and guidelines for multicultural liturgy and intercultural competence as being aimed at larger churches that have more resources and have the leadership to pull it off on a consistent basis. As noted before, it is much more difficult in poorer parishes that don't have the leaders or the money to buy the needed resources to implement these ideas.

Overall my experiences show what can happen when the Church focuses on being a unifying body, celebrating diversity in a way that is both an active and passive relationship. That is what inculturation should be. It goes back to what Magesa said about inculturation and incarnation: "the church cannot be realized as such [made flesh] until it becomes part of a particular people and is immersed in a particular language and way of doing things" (Magesa 137). Jesus' message was meant to be inclusive and to be preached to all nations—that is what is meant by the word "catholic" (Magesa 137). He continues, "The church cannot evangelize in spite of the various cultures of humanity but because of, through, with and by means of them" (Magesa 138). The church is many parts, but the one Body of Christ. Therefore, it is important for the church to encourage cultures to retain cultural identities while at the same time finding a way to be a unifying body: "One of the tasks of the Christian community in the process of inculturation, and as part of inculturation, in fact, is not to lose sight of the points that unite the church and that lead to the unity of humanity" (Magesa 257). I know for a fact that it is possible for the Church to find unity in diversity, and it is great gift when that happens.

I also know that diversity scares a lot of people. It is really hard for people to move out of their comfort zones. I know, at times, it has been difficult for my husband to worship at an inner city parish when he had gone to a suburban parish for most of his life. He got involved by helping to set up the Kirundi missalettes each week—he took pride in changing the pages! And now he eagerly raises his hand, waiting to answer Fr. Jim’s questions before the Children’s Liturgy of the Word. But whether the diverse congregation is in the inner city or in the suburbs, I think that it is important for any minister or any leader of worship to know their congregation. What may work at one church may not work at another, for a variety of reasons. For instance, knowing that many people at my church struggle just to make it from day-to-day, changes how we plan many Masses. I know that for Easter and Christmas, when we combine all of our music—Spanish, Kirundi and English—into one service, we often wait until the week or two before the service to schedule a rehearsal with everyone because many of our Guatemalans and Burundians can’t commit to singing or playing at the service until then. I know that that wouldn’t work for many churches, but, most of the time, it works for us.

Is St. Leo’s completely at the level of multicultural worship yet? Not quite, but that is the goal of my pastor, Fr. Jim Schutte. Here is some of what he has to say about his vision for St.

Leo and multiculturalism:

My vision for mass at St. Leo's is that we will move from bi-lingual liturgies and Tri- lingual liturgies to multi- cultural liturgies. I am learning the difference and believe that The Lord is calling us to be a multicultural parish that celebrates multicultural liturgies. It will be a slow process but we have already made some big steps. It is easy to be a parish with different and separate parishes in it. But doing social events together and ministry together and taking ownership of the parish together and sharing equal responsibility for its growth and having one parish council with representation of our diversity paints a picture that we are one parish with many parts working together for the common good of all. Language is the biggest barrier to this. With this in mind, our liturgies need to express the many cultures that influence it and we need to invite all the cultures to come together each week to praise The Lord (sic) together as best as we can. A good example of this is to have one choir that

consists of the multi cultures (sic) that sings each other's music together or songs that have alternating verses in different languages that everyone can sing instead of different groups taking turns singing songs in their own language. We want to be one body with many parts and not several bodies with many parts. (Schutte 9 November 2014).

After all, when we do worship together as a multicultural group, we are able to hear and see what unique history and background each culture brings. Isn't that what Christians—no matter who and where they are—should be celebrating? As mentioned in the readings on Pentecost Sunday, we are many parts, but we are all one Body of Christ.

Thus, is it possible for parishes to create an effective multicultural atmosphere through authentic liturgical worship? I think that St. Leo's is a work in progress when it comes to multicultural worship, especially in the area of consistently combining music and choirs. But I hope that St. Leo's is on its way to becoming a true multicultural parish, with a multicultural liturgy. We are already there in some ways. Fr. Jim says as much in his October 2014 newsletter column:

We can pray together, do ministry together, share meals together and play together. We watch out for each other and we care for one another and all others as brothers and sisters in the Lord, Jesus Christ. We are one together in the faith that we share. In prayer, recently, I heard the Lord say to me that I no longer need to refer to our parishioners as the Guatemalan Community or the Burundian Community or the American Community. We are St. Leo's the church of God, the Body of Christ in Cincinnati. No other distinctions are necessary (Schutte, St. Leo Newsletter, Oct. 2014).

I think the refrain to the "St. Leo Anniversary Song" by Rick Nohle (written for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary) sums it up very well: "Imana shimwe! Alabaré al Señor! Ev'ryone praise the Lord! Gott sei dank! Grazie a Dio! Ev'ryone thank the Lord!"

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## Appendix 1

Litany of Saints (English, Kirundi and Spanish)

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.

Saint Michael, pray for us.

Holy Angels of God, pray for us.

Yohani Batista [mweranda], udusabire.

Yozefu Mweranda, udusabire.

Petero and Paulo, udusabire.

San An-drés, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

San Juan, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

Santa María Magda-le-na, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

Saint Stephen, pray for us.

Saint Ignatius Antioch, pray for us.

Saint Lawrence, pray for us.

Perpetua and Felista, udusabire.

Anyesi, udusabire.

Gregori, udusabire.

San Agus-tín, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

San Ata-na-sio, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

San Ba-si-li-o, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

Saint Martin, pray for us.

Saint Benedict, pray for us.

Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, pray for us.

Fransisko Xaveri, udusabire.

Yohani Mariya Viane, udusabire.

Katarina, udusabire.

Santa Teresa de Ávi-la, rue-ga por no-so-tros.

Saint Leo, pray for us

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, pray for us.

Saint Bernard, pray for us.

All holy men and women, saints of God, pray for us.

## Appendix 2

Angels We Have Heard on High (Traditional) [English, Spanish, Kirundi]

1. Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply Echo back their joyous strains.

R: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Gloria! Decían con voz suave, Gloria a Jesús, el Rey de amor!  
Paz en la tierra a aquel que sabe Servir a Dios con santo ardor!

R: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.

3. Mu gihugu citwa Betlehemu, Abungere bakararira,  
Hafi yabo haka nk'umuravyo, Bakumv'ijwi riva mw'ijuru.

R: Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.