

Diocese of Galloway - Music Core Group

18 November 2002

To all Parish Musicians

Dear Everyone

It seems hard to believe that Christmas is approaching again, but another year is nearly over. Most of us are probably already planning and practising the music for our churches!

The music ministry day with John L Bell was thoroughly enjoyable, and attended by about 30 people from around the diocese. As usual, our thanks are due to Smithstone House for their excellent hospitality.

John Bell has been working in liturgy and spirituality with the Wild Goose Resource Group for about 15 years. Much of this has involved facilitating and encouraging lay leadership. About a third of his work is with Catholics, particularly in America and Australia.

John explored with us some of the reasons why people sing, and these included because we can, because it makes us happy and can change our mood, because it is a way of expressing and generating emotion (for example, singing 'Happy Birthday'), and because it helps us to remember and to tell the church's story.

Throughout the day we sang hymns and songs, some of them from the Iona Community, and some from the world church. It was amazing to see how we were enabled to sing new music in harmony almost immediately!

Songs can shape our faith. Using a country's traditional melodies in church music can be important, because it can allow Christ to become part of its culture. Singing songs and hymns from other countries is valuable, because it helps us to relate with the worldwide church.

God has given each of us a voice, and it is a unique gift that no-one else has! We offer our singing to God as individuals in a unique way. When a congregation comes together to sing, then this is something special, because it is a combination of voices that is in itself unique, and we are singing to an audience that is God.

FUTURE EVENTS AND DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The core group have set dates for further music ministry days on Saturday 15 March (in Kilwinning) and on Saturday 10 May (in Dumfries). There will be more information about the programme for these days, together with booking forms etc, in the next newsletter. The Open Air Mass next year will be on 17 August at Smithstone House.

The Diocese of Galloway 3rd Annual Carol Service is being held in the Good Shepherd Cathedral, Ayr, on Wednesday 18 December at 7.30 pm. Everyone is welcome and there will

be tea, coffee and mince pies in the hall afterwards.

OTHER EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

SCOTS (the Scottish Churches Organist Training Scheme) are holding an organists' training day in Edinburgh on Saturday 30 November, in the St Stephen's Centre and St Vincent's Episcopal Church, Stockbridge. The programme will include the anatomy of a pipe organ, factors which encourage and prevent a congregation from singing, tutorials (on ways in which the organist contributes to good singing, attractive and useful voluntaries, and discussions about the problems, frustrations and blessings of being a church musician), and a closing service. For more information contact Dr Evelyn Stell on 01506 510366, e-mail evelynstell@lineone.net.

Holy City 2002-2003 is a monthly city centre space for people who live in and puzzle over the world today; a time for certainty and doubt, for praising and questioning God, for discovering the value of conversation, silence, scripture, song and symbol. It focuses on the realities of choice, lifestyle, personal agenda and relevance of faith in city life today. The first half of each evening explores the issue of the day, the second half reflects it in contemporary and participative worship. Holy City 2002-2003 is enabled by the Wild Goose Resource Group and planned and led by an assortment of citizens. Events are held at 7 pm at Renfield St Stephen's Centre, 260 Bath Street, Glasgow. Dates are 24 November (on Belfast - the far and near place), 15 December (becoming small), 26 January (doubt - ally or enemy?), 23 February (soyabeans and windmills), 30 March (if the war goes on), etc. For more information telephone 0141 332 6343.

A Christmas singing day with John Rutter is being organised by Waverley Care, 58a Queen Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3NS. Write, or telephone 0131 226 2206 for more information.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Music and Liturgy - The magazine of the Society of St Gregory

The Society of St Gregory exists to support musicians and liturgists, helping to raise standards and to increase understanding. Their Summer Schools and other regional events offer an enjoyable way of experiencing good liturgy and teaching in the company of like minded people. They have a website at www.ssg.org.uk which is updated on a weekly basis and is the place to go for current news. SSG publications can also be purchased from the web site.

They publish a quarterly journal, Music and Liturgy. As well as containing articles of interest relating to music and liturgy, it also has a liturgy planning section. This contains notes about and music and hymn suggestions for the Sunday liturgies. It is an excellent publication, and a free sample copy can be obtained from the web site.

AND A SURVEY!

In our attempts to build up a picture of music in the diocese, we have already undertaken surveys of parts of the mass sung and hymn repertoire. It's now the turn of the psalms! As usual, a sheet is enclosed with this newsletter. Please will you fill it in and return it to Nicola, and we will let everyone know our findings in due course.

TO CONCLUDE . . . SPREADING THE MESSAGE

As ever, we welcome any suggestions for what the core group should be doing, and ways in which we can support and promote music.

If you have other musicians in your own parish who would like a copy of this newsletter, please copy it for them - or direct them to the web site to read it (www.gallowaymusic.net).

Please also show newsletters to your Parish Priest so that he is aware of the activities the core group is involved in.

We were pleased to speak to many of you (renewing old acquaintances and speaking to some of you for the first time!) when we did a 'phone round' to find out who was coming to the recent music day. It was encouraging to hear the news from your parishes, and the core group send you their best wishes for all you are doing and achieving for church music!

If you are receiving this newsletter, and you are no longer involved in music in your parish, please will you let Nicola know so that the mailing list can be updated.

With best wishes

The Music Core Group

Diocese of Galloway - Music Core Group **www.gallowaymusic.net**

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