



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO MÜNCHEN, ALTÖTTING AND REGENSBURG
(SEPTEMBER 9-14, 2006)

BLESSING OF THE NEW ORGAN

GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER

Regensburg's Alte Kapelle
Wednesday, 13 September 2006

This venerable house of God, the Basilica of “Our Lady of the Old Chapel”, has been splendidly refurbished - as we can see - and today receives a new organ, which will now be blessed and solemnly dedicated to its proper aim: the glorification of God and the strengthening of faith.

An important contribution to the renewal of sacred music in the nineteenth century was made by a canon of this collegiate church, Carl Joseph Proske. Gregorian chant and classic choral polyphony were integrated into the liturgy. The attention given to liturgical sacred music in the “Old Chapel” was so significant that it reached far beyond the confines of the region, making Regensburg a centre for the reform of sacred music, and its influence has continued to the present time.

In the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), it is emphasized that the “combination of sacred music and words ... forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy” (No. 112). This means that music and song are more than an embellishment (perhaps even unnecessary) of worship; they are themselves part of the liturgical action. Solemn sacred music, with choir, organ, orchestra and the singing of the people, is not therefore a kind of addition that frames the liturgy and makes it more pleasing, but an important means of active participation in worship. The organ has always been considered, and rightly so, the king of musical instruments, because it takes up all the sounds of creation – as was just said - and gives resonance to the fullness of human sentiments, from joy to sadness, from praise to

lamentation. By transcending the merely human sphere, as all music of quality does, it evokes the divine. The organ's great range of timbre, from *piano* through to a thundering *fortissimo*, makes it an instrument superior to all others. It is capable of echoing and expressing all the experiences of human life. The manifold possibilities of the organ in some way remind us of the immensity and the magnificence of God.

Psalm 150, which we have just heard and interiorly followed, speaks of trumpets and flutes, of harps and zithers, cymbals and drums; all these musical instruments are called to contribute to the praise of the triune God. In an organ, the many pipes and voices must form a unity. If here or there something becomes blocked, if one pipe is out of tune, this may at first be perceptible only to a trained ear. But if more pipes are out of tune, dissonance ensues and the result is unbearable. Also, the pipes of this organ are exposed to variations of temperature and subject to wear. Now, this is an image of our community in the Church. Just as in an organ an expert hand must constantly bring disharmony back to consonance, so we in the Church, in the variety of our gifts and charisms, always need to find anew, through our communion in faith, harmony in the praise of God and in fraternal love. The more we allow ourselves, through the liturgy, to be transformed in Christ, the more we will be capable of transforming the world, radiating Christ's goodness, his mercy and his love for others.

The great composers, each in his own way, ultimately sought to glorify God by their music. Johann Sebastian Bach wrote above the title of many of his musical compositions the letters S.D.G., *Soli Deo Gloria* – to God alone be glory. Anton Bruckner also prefaced his compositions with the words: *Dem lieben Gott gewidmet* – dedicated to the good God. May all those who enter this splendid Basilica, experiencing the magnificence of its architecture and its liturgy, enriched by solemn song and the harmony of this new organ, be brought to the joy of faith. This is my good wish and hope on the day when this new organ is inaugurated.

© Copyright 2006 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana