

Exultate (Hassler) R25  
Glory be to the Father & to the Son & to the H. Sp. / O Lord, let peace  
guide the course of world events, that your Church may serve you in joy &  
security. Thro Christ our Lord. — the Prayer for the Assembly, at yesterday's Mass.  
Most of the Assembly prayer (as well as the Offertory & Communion prayer) in the  
Roman rite of the Eucharist are extremely short and pithy, and notoriously difficult  
to put into good modern English, which catches the nuances and feeling of the  
original Latin. For many of them were composed by masters of the Latin language,  
and are very old. They're meant to be community prayer, as distinct from the  
personal and private prayer of saints and other holy people which make up the bulk  
of devotional prayer books of the older kind. Today, although these rather terse  
official liturgical prayers have been finding their way into more modern books of  
prayer, I think most people find them a bit too dry and condensed. They're  
often so short that, at Mass, they're over before we're really ready to pray them.  
There is a difficulty in finding a proper balance in length, as well as a much  
more fundamental one of finding a style of language that fittingly expresses what  
the Church wants to say and saying it in a way that is both attractive and  
intelligible to us for whom these liturgical prayers are recited Sunday after Sunday,  
and on the various fast-days. There was to have been published by now a  
greatly expanded variety of Assembly and other Mass prayer, for Sunday use in  
particular, but it hasn't yet appeared because the experts are still working at  
it are in disagreement and difficulty, and not all are satisfied with what they've  
been trying to produce. Frustrating tho' it may be for the rest of us, it is

worth knowing a lot of care is going into this project, and other similar attempts  
to provide an English liturgy which will be more in tune with our modern language  
and religious, liturgical, needs. There will, naturally, be dissatisfaction with  
some at least of the results: the important thing, surely, is to make use of whatever  
new is produced, as well as what we have at present, as prayer. It may mean  
a little more attention, or some prior preparation — it may mean trying to see  
and feel beyond our own immediate needs and moods (a function of liturgy is  
to be instructive and educational for people taking part in it), but there is a  
wealth of real prayer, with the Church as a whole, to be found in these formulae  
wh. at first glance may seem so brief and even cold. Even to read them thoughtfully  
over before Mass begins would be a good and prayerful preparation to listening to  
the word of God in the scripture you'll be hearing — and a prayerful attitude,  
attentive to the voice of God speaking to you, today, is always necessary if we are  
really to understand the scriptures. Very often, the Assembly prayer of the Mass with  
in fact be chanting in prayer a community response to God's word. Whether  
you, or the preacher giving the scripture homily, consciously advert to this or  
not, you can be sure that if you pattern your own personal prayer on the  
liturgical prayer of the day, you will be praying in the spirit of God's  
message and with the whole Church celebrating His presence among us in word &  
action. / For a prayer in music now, let's listen to part of a Ps. setting  
by Giovanni Gabrieli; Inclina Domine — Lord, give ear to me & listen to my  
prayer.

Sabriel: Process  
& Canon Music 2<sup>5</sup>  
(RS 165)

# MUSIC - PRAYERS

Our Lord used all sorts of different kinds of parables in His preaching and teaching: they weren't always what we immediately think of, as good and apt illustrations or stories to make His point more clear. In the gospels it appears that at times, at least, He spoke in parables so that not all His audience wd. in fact grasp what He was getting at. Then, afterwards, He wd. explain in private with His apostles & disciples what He meant. "He explained everything to his disciples when they were alone." Listening to those same parables read for us at Mass, there is often much that we don't really understand either, whatever partial help we may get from the sermon. There is much about the kingdom of God, about the Church, about the activity of God in the world that we don't understand, that has to be taken really 'on faith'. Just like in the parable from St Mark's gospel you'll have heard yesterday: "A man throws seed on the land. Night & day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting & growing; how, he does not know." How the plans of God are naturally in the world, in our society, in ourselves, we just do not know. But we do know He is active, and we do know (tho' not always in the dearest way like, and which it's our responsibility to discover) what we must do to be in tune with His plans and be instruments in His hands. We need to be in contact with Him - and that's prayer. We need to be alone with Christ so that He can explain to us the meaning of His parables, as well as the meaning of His whole teaching and life, death & resurrection - and that's also prayer, our own & the Church's.