

## **USCCB Administrative Committee Approves Change to *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship***

In response to a request from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the USCCB Administrative Committee adopted a change on September 12, 2012 to the U.S. Bishops' 2007 guidelines on liturgical music, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. Number 188 of the document has been altered to remove any further permission for the use of Christological tropes or other adaptations to the text of the *Agnus Dei* (*Lamb of God*).

The Latin Church members of the USCCB had originally approved *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship* in November 2007 by a margin of 88% (only a simple majority was required). Originally intended to be presented as particular law (which would have required a two-thirds majority and subsequent confirmation by the Holy See), the text was finally presented as a set of non-binding guidelines for use in the dioceses of the United States. At the time the common practice in many parishes was to extend the singing of the *Lamb of God*, often required to accompany the Fraction Rite that included the pouring of the Precious Blood into chalices for the distribution of Holy Communion under both kinds, by the addition of additional Christological invocations. It was noted during the drafting of the text of *Sing to the Lord*, and in the modification and amendment process with the body of Bishops, that this had been a custom that was widely accepted in the United States, and was also acceptable practice in other languages, including the German *Singmessen*, which have been in long-standing use in German-language territories.

Over the past several years there has been discussion in the Committee on Divine Worship regarding this apparent discrepancy, and the policy of the Secretariat in regard to the approval of musical settings of the Order of Mass shifted in preparation for the implementation of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition* last year. Composers of new musical settings of the parts of the Order of Mass from the *Roman Missal* were prohibited from including alternate texts for the *Lamb of God*. All new approved musical settings of the Order of Mass are, therefore, in conformity with this change.

Earlier this year, Timothy Cardinal Dolan, USCCB President, received a letter (Prot. n. 158/12/L) from Archbishop J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P., then-Secretary of the Congregation, regarding the practice of adding “tropes” or other Christological invocations to the *Lamb of God*. The Congregation noted that this practice is not in conformity with no. 130 of the Order of Mass, and requested that the USCCB make this information available to publishers and pastors. Cardinal Dolan responded that the matter would be addressed, in part through a correction to *Sing to the Lord*.

This alteration is effective immediately, and affects all existing and future musical settings of the *Lamb of God*. The relevant paragraph now reads (new text in underline):

188. The supplicatory chant *Agnus Dei* accompanies the Fraction Rite. It is, “as a rule, sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation responding; or it is, at least, recited aloud. This invocation accompanies the fraction and, for this reason, may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has reached its conclusion, the last time ending with the words *dona nobis pacem* (*grant us peace*)” (GIRM, no. 83). The *Agnus Dei* should not be prolonged unnecessarily (see GIRM, no. 83) nor may other texts be added to this chant.