

# *Planning Notes for the Service of Gifting Hymns between Catholics & Methodists.*

"I will praise the LORD  
according to His  
righteousness,



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## **A Message from the Catholic Methodist Dialogue in Aotearoa – New Zealand.**

For over 40 years Catholics and Methodists have been talking to one another in a dialogue of growing understanding. These conversations have happened right around the world in many places and many ways. Those of us who have been part of that conversation here in Aotearoa New Zealand regard ourselves as privileged and enriched by the experience.

We find that there is much to affirm and celebrate. As Catholics and Methodists engaged in dialogue we would wish to affirm our deepening appreciation for each other, while we hope and pray for full communion between us we recognise that the shared pilgrimage that is the journey to this destination is in itself rich with meaning and new understanding.

What has been apparent from the very beginning of dialogue between us is a sense of connection, possibility and of a deep recognition of the “other” as being a brother or sister in Christ. This was described well in *“Synthesis. Together to Holiness – 40 Years of Methodist Roman Catholic Dialogue.”*

*“From the beginning of our dialogue, without glossing over difficulties, members of the Joint Commission have increasingly discovered the richness of the certain though sadly yet imperfect communion that Methodists and Catholics already share.”*

We would particularly note our shared use of the *Revised Common Lectionary*. Though there are some differences in selected texts week by week Methodists and Catholics are hearing, reflecting and praying about the same Gospel stories. We would also like to celebrate the warmth and friendship which

often characterises relationships between Catholic and Methodist communities around the country.

Over time we have found points of resonance in our spirituality that have allowed us to explore this topic with a depth and ease. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Methodism began not simply in an Evangelical revival but in a sacramental revival and that John Wesley himself was familiar with and promoted both patristic writings and contemporary Catholic writers on the spiritual life. Though he was clearly an English Protestant of his time his interactions with and disposition towards Catholics was marked by what for that time was an uncommon graciousness and good will. We might note that on his visits to Ireland he was generally well received by Irish Catholics who though resistant to his new movement could see that his was not the sharply partisan Protestantism that so often served to dispossess and marginalise them.

The growing and deepening of our relationship has enabled us to see in one another gifts and graces that we can each learn from and be enriched by. We can offer these riches to one another as an example of what is called receptive ecumenism; a relationship of giving and receiving in which we are mutually enriched by the other.

It is in that spirit that this liturgy is offered, a celebration of the deep and still deepening relationship between us through the gifting of hymns old and new. May the services where we come together to celebrate this gifting be a gathering of friends and a sign of a continued sharing over time.

### **Some Notes for Planners.**

This is a simple service, we do not believe it will be burdensome to arrange or to lead, however some sharing and planning beforehand is always beneficial. The following thoughts are offered as planning prompts and are pretty self evident.

Perhaps the first issue to clarify is about the venue; who is to host the service?

Then what day and time? While it would be a powerful symbol if every service happened on the same day and time this is likely to be less than practical. What works? Catholics will want to make sure it doesn't clash with a Sunday Mass and Methodists will want to make sure it does not clash with a time of service when a service is planned in the parish for a community worshipping in another language. We want to create opportunities to participation, not barriers to it.

And who leads? How is the leadership of this service enacted in a way which reflects and celebrates our growing closeness?

Time is needed for musicians to practice, again how can who plays and leads music reflect our sharing and mutuality?

One difference in how we worship is the Lord's Prayer. Methodists conclude it with the doxology "for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours ..." while Catholics finish at " ... *and deliver us from evil.*" We have been advised that, as this is not a formal Catholic liturgy, there is no objection to concluding the Lord's

Prayer with the doxology. Or as an act of hospitality it could be said in the custom of the visiting congregation. Whatever you chose it will need to be introduced and we would suggest, for the sake of clarity, including the words in your order of service.

Lastly how do we conclude afterwards? Think about hospitality and the provision of refreshments.

### **Readings from our Two Traditions on Hymn Singing for use in the Service.**

From *Musicae Sacrae*. Pope Pius XII, (1955.)  
*We must hold in honour that music which is not primarily part of the sacred liturgy, but which by its power and purpose greatly aids religion. This music is rightly therefore called religious music. The Church has possessed such music from the beginning and it has developed happily under the Church's auspices. As experience shows it can exercise great and salutary force and power on the souls of the faithful ...*

*The tunes of these hymns, which are often sung in the language of the people, are memorized with almost no effort or labour. The mind grasps the words and the music. They are frequently repeated and completely understood. Hence even boys and girls, learning these sacred hymns at a tender age, are greatly helped by them to know, appreciate and memorize the truths of the faith.*

*Therefore when We praised the manifold power and apostolic effectiveness of sacred music, We spoke of something that can be a source of great joy and solace to all who in any way have dedicated themselves to its study or practice. All who use the art they possess to compose such musical compositions, to teach them or to perform them by singing or using musical instruments, undoubtedly exercise in many ways a true and genuine apostolate. They will receive from Christ the Lord the generous rewards and honours of apostles for the work they have done so faithfully.*

***Directions on Singing.*** John Wesley, (1761.)  
*(John Wesley's Directions on Singing was often found in the front of early Methodist hymnals. It contained the following advice.)*

*Learn these tunes before you learn any others:  
afterwards learn as many as you please.*

*Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them in any way at all; and if you learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.*

*Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a single degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.*

*Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice*

*now, nor more ashamed of it being heard, then when you sung the songs of Satan.*

*Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.*

*Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from us, and sing all our tunes as quick as we did our first.*

*Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.*