The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy tells us, “the musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value” (112). The Constitution was the first document produced by the Second Vatican Council in 1963, and it called for the reform and promotion of the liturgy. One of the eight chapters in this document addresses the integral nature of music in the liturgy, and identifies norms and principles for its renewal and promotion.

The Constitution explains that the purpose of sacred music is “the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful” (112). Sacred music adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, and confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. As a result, the Council Fathers declared that the treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care, through the promotion of choirs and a wider and more frequent teaching and practice of music in seminaries, institutions, and schools (see CSL, 114, 115).

Through your ministry as a musician, you not only give glory to the Father by singing his praise, but also by leading and encouraging the active participation of all the faithful, which is our right and duty by reason of our Baptism in Christ. The sacred action of the liturgy is enhanced by the inclusion of music and the fullness of Christ’s Body joining together in song.

As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the Church offers gratitude for your contribution and engagement in the liturgy. We encourage you to reflect further on the value of your ministry, and to explore the rich text of this document on your own or with a study group. Finally, we pray that our liturgical celebrations increasingly gather the entire Body of Christ into deep and lasting communion.