

Choral Music is amazing. It is the reality of all those voices working together, adding their uniqueness to produce a masterpiece of sound. No one voice dominates, or makes it about him or her; rather, the goal is the Piece of Music. One of my favorite composers, who is still alive, is Morten Lauridsen, and especially his work "O Magnum Mysterium." To listen to it is to be transported! If you go to the website and look for the homily, I have provided a link to this piece.

Another Choral Creator is Eric Whitacre, a Minden Native who created Virtual Choirs. He sent people their choir parts which they recorded themselves singing their particular parts. He then compiled all those videos into one unified piece. He has done this about 5 times. Amazing work...people singing together for the purpose of creating a beautiful transcendent experience. Again posted on the website.

Choirs succeed because the members work and blend together, working for a common goal; to produce beautiful music, under the guidance of a director.

Meetings can be excruciating; yet meetings can also be transformative. It depends on the agenda and the goal. When a group comes together who are open to ideas; who seek to grow and collaborate, meetings are great. Problems and challenges get resolved; progress is made. So it is important that staff and members be nurtured, respected and also managed; and that everyone keeps the bigger goal in mind.

The Mission, the goal, of the Church is to announce the Good News: God's great love for all persons. A love that saves, that lifts up persons, restores persons; liberates all. Our mission is just that.

Oddly, it is not about converting everyone to Catholicism, as attractive as that may seem. It is about helping people to be transformed in God's love. If people want to join in the mission as Catholics, super!

This mission governs our life as church; how we celebrate our sacraments and worship, how we pray; it is supposed to define our pastoral ministry as church, diocese and parish.

One of the great innovations, or rather one of the great return to our roots that came from the 2nd Vatican Council was the understanding that this mission is shared by all the baptized. It was not the work of clergy and religious only, whereas the laity were just to pray and pay. The Council wanted to reclaim the original church mission, in which all participated. This has shaped our Church pastoral ministry these past 60 years.

We all have our parts and we all can contribute. The difficult part is being in harmony; it is grasping that some persons do this in ways that are different from maybe the way we do it.

Another great insight of the Council was to recognize that other Christian Communities also work for the mission. We do not need to be in conflict with them, but we can work together.

The great ecumenical effort that came from that, especially in the USA, has helped many, many persons. We work together in the Reno Sparks area to aid the poor and homeless; working together to provide solutions to the housing shortage.

The Holy Spirit conducts us. The Holy Spirit, that very love of God that is poured into our hearts from Baptism, Confirmed in us by the Special Sacrament, pushes us forward to work as one, unified, but not always uniform, so that many can know God's love.

This is Jesus' point. His disciples see a possible outsider and they want him stopped. Jesus says that the bigger picture is the most important, the mission.

A parish thrives when people work for the common goal, for the mission. People thrive when they participate in the mission, when they have an active part in the mission.

A great joy as Pastor is having parishioners come together and do good things; feeding the poor, supporting our youth, helping missionaries, gathering around someone who has just lost a loved one, or just received a horrible diagnosis, or feels lost, or is new to our community.

We all too have different aptitudes which can be part of this mission. There are great cooks in this parish, there are great listeners, there are great organizers, and there are great worker bees. No one person is better or worse, all help with something bigger than themselves.

And when we sing together as a parish, when we harmonize our actions, our gifts, our capacities, our diversity, something beautiful happens. People's needs are met, people find reason to hope; people find a community, people find a love; people experience God.