



LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT AND SING

The largest gathering of Catholic Pastoral Musicians in Australia was celebrated at the Catholic Leadership Centre in Melbourne from October 1-3. Hosted biennially in different Australian states, the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network (APMN) National Conference celebrates and supports the work of Catholic pastoral music ministries in liturgical, catechetical, youth ministry, school, hospital, prison, community, diocesan and parish settings. The conference theme, *Listen to the Spirit and Sing*, aligned with Australia's Plenary Council 2020 theme.

Expert presenters offered keynotes, workshops, showcases, and over forty-five dynamic breakout sessions to over three hundred and thirty participants from all over Australia and New Zealand, covering a wide range of topics and musical genres. These were framed by beautiful Morning Prayer sessions, a commissioning ceremony, and a joyful Conference Mass celebrated by Archbishop Peter Comensoli.

Keynote presenters, Dr Tony Alonso (theologian and composer) and Diana Macalintal (co-founder TeamRCIA) from the United States, covered such topics as *Becoming what we sing: liturgical reflections from the heart of Pope Francis*; *Liturgical participation: how we learn the true Christian Spirit*; and *Becoming leaders of sung prayer*. Tony and Diana are accomplished musicians, composers and liturgists, as well as gifted communicators and empowering teachers. Both are widely published and have worked extensively in youth ministry, in diverse parish communities, and a range of multicultural settings.



Sr Deirdre Browne IBVM and Roger Heagney OAM were honoured at the conference dinner for their outstanding service to liturgical music in Australia with life memberships to APMN. Four scholarships were awarded for young pastoral musicians to further enhance their skills and training in Music Ministry. The scholarships are named after Rev Dr Russell Hardiman and Rev Dr Bill Jordan, who were both dedicated to the renewal of the Church and liturgical music, as envisioned by Vatican II. Recipients of the scholarships this year were Emma Fradd (QLD), Cecilia Jackson (NSW), Patrick Shannon (VIC) and Dominique Laban (NSW).

Another of the highlights of the conference was the *Listening to Youth* panel discussion. The APMN has a special focus on supporting young people to take their place in the church and to enhance their love of the liturgy and pastoral music through excellent training.

The next APMN conference will be held in 2021 where the keynote speaker will be internationally acclaimed pastoral musician, Bernadette Farrell (*Christ, Be Our Light*). See the APMN website and facebook page for regular updates and more information regarding the 2021 conference, and for local and state-based events. Membership of the APMN is open to all.

To find out more about the APMN and to sign up for conference notes from the 2019 conference and others, please visit www.apmn.org.au

APMN National Executive

Photos top: Sophy Morley, Tony Alonzo and Susan Crowe

Bottom: Susan Crowe

The APMN Conference was a national conference celebrating liturgical, catechetical and religious music for parishes, schools and beyond. The Conference was open to all musicians, cantors, conductors, composers, choristers, teachers, catechists, campus ministers, clergy, liturgy teams ... and all who love sung prayer. The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation provided sponsorship for a number of people from the diocese to attend this Conference. Diocesan e-News is featuring stories from participants.

During the first week in October the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network held its fourth National Conference in Melbourne. The convenors, Michael Mangan and Sophy Morley, created a wonderful program which fulfilled the design brief “..to nurture and develop pastoral music ministries in parishes, schools and church communities.”

I was blessed to be recommended by my parish and to receive sponsorship from the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation to attend the conference and found it rewarding, full of variety and challenging. The two key presenters, Tony Alonzo and Diana Macalintal, were passionate, talented and very willing to share their knowledge, experiences and thoughts. I was so pleased to see a female who has carved out a rewarding career and holds down an important position within the Catholic Church. It was inspiring to hear both of them speak, as well as watch and listen to them sing/share their musical gifts.

Day one started with a magical Opening Liturgy, introducing the wonderful choir. Tony Alonzo’s first keynote address introduced us to his great talent and sense of humour, as he incorporated both into his talk about music; why we might like the music we do - I particularly liked the section on neuroscience to help explain this. He linked music to memory and emotion, showing a YouTube clip about dementia patients’ responses to music. He talked to us about the responsibility that comes with organising or being part of the music within the liturgy and how musicians need to be open to the Spirit, keeping our own likes and dislikes grounded, so as to be aware of the diversity of the congregation and that God’s voice can be heard in so many different ways.

The youth panel was fascinating to listen to and challenging to hear from. The amazing panel - Seth, Gen, James, Alyssa and Jack - spoke eloquently about being younger in an ageing church.

Tony and Diana’s plenary workshop on “Becoming Leaders of Sung Prayer” included eight steps that were worth printing off to keep as a constant reminder of what I am working to be.

Paul Taylor’s workshop on the sung Responsorial Psalm contained some interesting historical input, the differing styles and discussion about some issues when practising. There was much food for thought to take back to the parish. Andrew’s Chinn’s breakout on singing through the year gave many useful ideas for music to use within the classroom and for school choirs. It reminded us also of the talents of Jane Mitchell, Timothy Hart and Drew Lane.

On day two, after another wonderful morning prayer full of song, Diana Macalintal gave the keynote address. She spoke on liturgical preparation and recommended readings to help with our understanding of liturgy. She spoke about Mystagogical reflection - encountering Christ, reflecting on both engaging and discomfiting responses, using catechesis, connecting to personal life and, lastly, conversion (living differently). She also spoke of the three levels of participation - firstly surface i.e., showing up and doing the actions, secondly recognising and using the meaning of the ritual in our life and, lastly life in the Trinity - being shaped by the Liturgy - leaving our comfort zone to encounter Christ.

Patricia Smith's breakout was an excellent tutorial on working with children's choir. It was full of practical information, ideas and songs. She has a wealth of experience that she willingly shared, while encouraging input from the attendees.

Jacinta Jakovcevic led an excellent breakout on "How to help them sing", as well as a brief history on the use of the organ for church. She gave her attendees valuable and practical information on the use of the organ when playing at church and when playing with a choir. Her talk reinforced some of my own thoughts about musicianship at church and added other ideas.

The highlight of Wednesday was the Mass celebrated by Archbishop Peter Comensoli. It was a moving, prayerful experience and a wonderful showcase for music in the liturgy.

Day three started with another wonderful keynote address by Tony Alonzo. He used reflections from Pope Francis to talk about Eucharist and daily life. Taking the Gospel story of the blind man he spoke about Eucharistic in three different ways.

1. Eucharistic vision - see God in people and events that don't always match our own vision of God (self-emptying love).
2. Using the Samaritan woman at the well he talked about Eucharistic mercy - God's law exists for the salvation of all people and it is not just about "forgiving and forgetting" but being able to forgive while still remembering.
3. Eucharistic Mission - how our lives fit with the Eucharistic and how we need to trust in the slow work of God. The grace to "do" mission, not about us but about what Christ makes with us. During this discussion Tony also talked about the wounds the church has inflicted on various groups of people.

Anthony Young's breakout on "The Organ in Contemporary Worship" was inspiring. He showed us that the organ can play on its own but also support a choir and instruments considered more contemporary, like guitar or electric keyboard. His knowledge on how to use the organ in different situations was wonderful. The young musicians who accompanied him were very talented showcasing guitar, keyboard, percussion and organ working together.

Maureen Mahon, who led the "Organ for Kids, Teens and Adults" workshop had many years of experience as a Suzuki organ teacher. She also shared some great resources that we could use.

Overall this conference was so worthwhile. The organisers need to be congratulated on the range of their program and quality of the speakers. We were inspired, challenged, supported and... well fed! Opportunities like this enliven our spirit, help us to continue to commit to our parishes and provide opportunities for lay leadership. It also provides us with time and space to grow, learn and be present for each other.

Lyn Hyland - St Joseph's Parish, Warrnambool

Never having attended an APMN conference before I really had no idea what to expect. One thing I should have expected was that the music and singing would be great. I wasn't disappointed. From the opening liturgy on Tuesday morning in a church full of Catholics singing at the top of their lungs to the closing liturgy, singing perfused the whole conference. I don't think I attended one session of the conference where people were not asked to sing and everyone did just that. One of the keynote speakers reminded us that the central element of Christian Liturgical music is the human voice and this was certainly given flesh at the APMN conference.

The Keynote presenters for the conference were Tony Alonso and Diana Macalintal, both from the United States. Tony is a theologian and composer. His compositions embrace multicultural musical expressions and reflect a commitment to strong ritual song. Diana is the co-founder of TeamRCIA and an acclaimed author and speaker on Catholic liturgy, music and the catechumenate.

Tony Alonso presented the first keynote address on Tuesday entitled "Listen to this! A not so universal language". The key point of Tony's presentation was that even though we have a romantic notion of music being a "universal" language and a unifying force, our experience as pastoral musicians has often taught us that this is not always the case. Through his research Tony showed us that musical appeal has many psychosocial, neurological and cultural influences. This is often starkly illustrated to us in the extremes of feedback (both positive and negative) that we may be given for the same piece of music by our congregations and communities. Discussions about genre, instrumentation, style do not really serve a purpose if they are simply about "taste" or subjective music preference. The choices of style, instrumentation, etc., are better made on the basis of how those choices will best enable the full and active participation of our communities in the liturgy. A primary goal should always be to enable as many people as possible to sing.

Tuesday afternoon Diana and Tony ran a plenary workshop together entitled "Becoming leaders of Sung Prayer". When we lead an assembly in song, we do more than just sing - we lead people in prayer and proclamation. To do this effectively we need to not only have good music skills but to develop a life of prayer centred in God's word. For example, if we are going to lead a congregation in singing the psalm, we could try to enter into that psalm for the week before by reading it, speaking it, singing it, improvising on it, studying it, memorising it, relating it to our lives. Tony and Diana then outlined a few key points to help improve our ministry:

1. Act gracefully - be confident and be the face of mercy. Use deliberate acts and strong gestures;
2. Love the community – know people's names, pray for them;
3. Carry the Word always – remember your role as animator and proclaimer, explain to the choir why you have chosen the particular songs.
4. Encourage one another – remember the assembly are the primary music ministers, we are there to encourage and support them. Be a team player.
5. Live passionately – dance, sing, play, laugh. Believe that what this assembly does makes a difference. Treat liturgy with respect. Love the sound of the assembly singing. Live in the present – be attentive not worried, don't be afraid.

Wednesday's plenary session was presented by Diana and was entitled, "Liturgical Participation; How we learn the true Christian spirit." Diana asked the question, "What good is the bread and wine changing if we don't". She spoke of three levels of participation: surface level; level of Christ's action; and level of Life of the Trinity. At each of these levels of participation there are things that can be done that may help move us and others to a deeper level. She suggested praying together as a choir, reading the song text together and reflecting on it or asking a mystagogical question. Diana emphasised that the Eucharist and life are not separate but inform each other. We praise God by doing justice. "Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life". In the Eucharist, the Spirit gathers us and we see and hear that God loves us, we respond and become one with Christ and one another. The Spirit sends us out and we tell and show others that God loves them. They respond and we gather again.

The final plenary session was on Thursday morning presented by Tony and entitled “Becoming what we sing: Liturgical Reflections from the heart of Pope Francis”. This session continued on with the theme of the inseparable connection between liturgy, belief and daily life. Tony asked the question, “How are our lives consistent with the Eucharist”. Participation in the Eucharist means engaging all of life “Eucharistically”. He also reminded us that singing songs of justice and peace is not the same thing as doing the work of justice and peace. We should sing these songs to remind ourselves of the work still to be done.

Each day of the conference also included “breakout” workshop sessions. As a composer I was very interested to participate in sessions run by established composers and there were a number of opportunities to do this. I attended the following workshops:

The sung responsorial Psalm - led by Paul Taylor. This workshop took us through the various forms of psalmody and was very helpful in understanding how to better set psalms to music.

The Power of the Spirit – Liturgical Songs Publisher showcase - led by Paul Mason. Showcased a number of composers works of Psalms and Mass settings.

The Guitar in worship: Supporting full participation in a beautiful liturgy – led by Tim Hart. Helpful hints for guitarists playing in liturgies.

Musical Stewardship: How are we preparing for the future? – led by Anthony Young. This was a very inspiring workshop led by Anthony and six young students from St Laurence College in Brisbane. The point of the workshop (illustrated beautifully by the students), was that music formation, opportunities and encouragement to be involved in music ministry can have a profound effect on young and old.

One Small Voice – led by Genevieve Bryant. Gen shared some of her journey into music ministry and working with young people

The work of our hands: Composing for the Catholic Church – led by Tony Alonso. Tony led us through some insights into composing liturgical and sacred music. Some take away points for me included consideration when composing of inspiration that leads to participation, to evaluate compositions and seek wide sources of feedback. Consider Litanies, mantras, call and response styles. To compose away from your instrument to encourage connection with the voice. That the prime reason for composing is for the service of the liturgy.

As already mentioned, each day began with liturgy which was both beautiful and inspiring. Wednesday afternoon, Archbishop Peter Comensoli presided over the Conference Mass.

It was extremely encouraging to meet people from all over Australia who are committed to music ministry in our church. There was deep sense of connection with people because of our shared experience of faith and music. Some new friends were made.

I am extremely grateful to the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation for sponsoring me to attend this conference. My knowledge and understanding of the important place of music in our liturgy and our church life was deepened immensely. I feel confident that because of my attendance at the conference I will be a better music minister and composer in the service of my community and the Lord.

Don Stewart - St Joseph's Parish, Warrnambool

I recently had the privilege of attending the 2019 Australian Pastoral Musicians Network's 4th National Conference from October 1 – 3 at the Catholic Leadership Centre in Melbourne. It was an extremely informative and rewarding experience. I was in awe of the talent, the sincerity, faith and commitment of all those involved.

The three-day program included Keynote Presentations, Workshops, Conference Dinner, the APMN AGM, four Liturgies and the Conference Mass.

The Keynote Presenters were Tony Alonso and Diana Macalintal, both from the US. Tony is a theologian and composer whose compositions embrace multicultural musical expressions and reflect a commitment to strong ritual song. Diana is the co-founder of TeamRCIA and an acclaimed author and speaker on Catholic liturgy, music and catechumenate. With over 30 Australian Composers and Liturgists (Michael Mangan, Andrew Chinn, Paul Taylor, Paul Mason, Fiona Dyball, Anthony Young, Tim Hart, Seth Harsh and Genevieve Bryant to name a few), there was literally something for everyone. The Workshops were elected by Focus Streams, enabling anyone with particular interests (Youth, Liturgical, Ministry, etc) to book the sessions most relevant to them.

To all those who love sung prayer – the liturgies and Mass was the place to be!! St John the Evangelist Church struggled to keep its roof on when the spontaneous choir of hundreds participated in the beautifully arranged liturgies and Mass, which was celebrated by Archbishop Peter Comensoli.

The Conference Dinner was a chance for everyone to catch up with old friends and acquaintances, enjoying a lovely meal and congratulating the recipients of the 2019 Perpetual APMN Memberships – Sr Deirdre Browne and Roger Heagney and APMN Scholarships - Emma Fradd from Queensland, Patrick Shannon from Victoria, as well as Cecilia Jackson and Dominique Laban from New South Wales.

The Conference timetable and schedule was faultless. We received information packs at the Welcome and Registration and everything flowed perfectly from there. The venue was great – it was the first time I had been to the Catholic Leadership Centre and a perfect choice for such an event.

To Michael Mangan (National Chair) and all of the APMN team – congratulations!! It was wonderful to be part of such a powerful event and I thank the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation for the opportunity to be part of it and look forward to incorporating many of the hymns in our Sunday Masses and school Liturgies.

Andrea Roache - St Mary's Parish, Colac