

# The Perception of Sound in the Liturgy: Changes in Times of Change

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*If anything has changed during the twentieth century, it is the perception of the phenomenon of music. The irruption of sound into our lives is accompanied by changes in the use, understanding and enjoyment of music. The liturgy employs music as a sensible element for celebrating the Word and singing the same Word in the sacraments, in the liturgy of the hours and in prayer. For centuries the music was a bridge for the transcendent, today this element is thoroughly affected by the influences of the omnipresence of sound and of the challenge of real sound, that is of authenticity. We will try to respond to the question of what is changing in our societies in the matter of listening, while the liturgy continues to use sound as an element of perceiving the Mystery of God. The attention to the theological weight of these questions will underline the importance of paying attention to the contemporary world of sound for a liturgical understanding.*

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## Introduction

If anything has changed during the twentieth century, it is the perception of the phenomenon of music<sup>1</sup>. The irruption of sound into our lives

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<sup>1</sup> The paradigm shift in the musical language detonates the canons of musical insertion in the liturgy. Hence the problems of conservation, understanding and adaptation of the historical heritage that has been used for centuries in the liturgy, which seems to have been expelled from their natural liturgical environment, going on to the concert halls and being the heritage of the specialists or the new movements. The change of the musical language paradigm affects greatly the liturgical paradigm. Ignoring this problem hinders the relationship of the present with the past. Much more, the ability to create a contemporary musical language that adheres to the contemporary liturgical paradigm. Many of the current problems in the liturgical musical praxis, at least in the West, I think, deal with ignorance or lack of acceptance of this paradigm shift, that can even be called momentous, which marks our aesthetic, liturgical and ecclesial realities.