

Singing Our Faith 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – November 12, 2017

Sunday's readings are woven tightly together with themes of vigilance, preparation, faith, and wisdom—all of which point to the second coming of Christ. In Psalm 63, King David's words speak of that inner desire for God that is planted in each of us. This psalm echoes the first reading from the Book of Wisdom – *“Resplendent and unfading is wisdom, and she is readily perceived by those who love her, and found by those who seek her.”* Together, these scriptures motivate us to seek God, who is always ready to meet us.

But it's not that simple. The gospel parable of the 10 virgins instructs us to be wise and thorough in our preparation to meet God. In other words, showing up is the bare minimum. In just two weeks, we will hear the parable of the last judgement. These requirements - feed the hungry, clothe the naked, etc. - are our preparations for meeting God at the end of our final journey. Like the foolish virgins who didn't prepare with enough lamp oil, those who merely “show up” without any other effort will not be recognized by God at their final judgement. If we put ourselves the doorstep and hear God speaking those words to us - “I do not know you.” - our eyes should well up with tears. And, if we haven't already, we should get to work—the work of discipleship.

If we seek God, his Spirit who imparts wisdom, and perform the works of discipleship, we will then have the deep faith in the resurrection that Paul describes in his first letter to the Thessalonians—Sunday's second reading.

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Although we're still in Ordinary Time, the Liturgy of the Word has Advent undertones. The opening hymn "Savior of the Nations, Come" (below) is new to us, but well known in many Christian denominations. The 4th century hymn text is attributed to St. Ambrose, and its original melody is similar to the one in our hymnal. That said, the hymn is more well known by Lutherans, since Martin Luther adapted the original hymn into the version printed in our hymnal.

Several parts of the text grab my attention, beginning with the phrase "*Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth,*" which concludes the first stanza. Christianity is the only religion in which the deity became human. How unique that our God sought a personal relationship with his people by becoming one of them. Tied up in the Advent/Christmas message is stanzas 3 and 4, which poetically speak of Christ's ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection. Many beloved Christmas carols express the joy of the birth of Christ, but neglect the end result of the incarnation.

To round out our liturgy, full of deep messages for reflection, is the light-hearted hymn "Soon and Very Soon." The message is simple, and the spirit of the music is a reminder that, even in the face of death and judgement, our faith gives us joy that Christ has won the ultimate victory over death.

Stephen Eros

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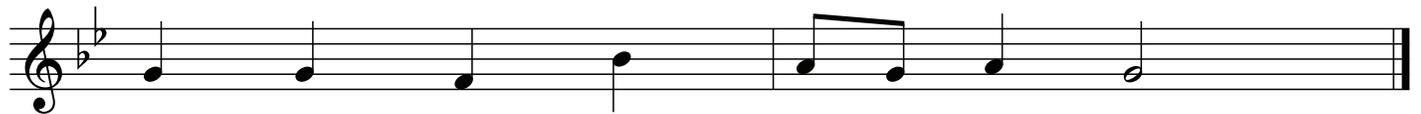
Savior of the Nations, Come



1. Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; Vir - gin's Son, make
2. Not by hu - man flesh and blood, But the Spir - it
3. Won - drous birth! O won - drous child Of the Vir - gin
4. From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, Back to God his
5. Bright - ly does Christ's man - ger shine, Glo - rious is its



here your home. Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth,
of our God, Was the Word of God made flesh,
un - de - filed! Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son,
path - way leads; Out to van - quish death's com - mand,
light di - vine. Night can - not this light sub - due;



That the Lord chose such a birth.
Wom - an's off - spring, pure and fresh.
Ea - ger now his race to run!
Back to reign at God's right hand.
Let our faith shine ev - er new.

Text: *Veni, Redemptor gentium*; ascr. to St. Ambrose, 340–397; German tr. by Martin Luther, 1483–1546; English tr. sts. 1–3, 5 by William M. Reynolds, 1812–1876; st. 4 by Martin L. Seltz, 1909–1967, alt., © 2006, Augsburg Fortress
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