

Singing Our Faith 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – September 10, 2017

The scriptures for this weekend are intertwined with love and charity. The central point of all this is the second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Romans. He reminds us that all of the commandments are summed up into the greatest commandment – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” From this great commandment, we're reminded of our **obligation** to love our neighbor by reconciling with them (gospel), by leading them out of sinful ways (first reading), and by praying in community (gospel).

We begin Mass this weekend with a new hymn, “When In Our Music God Is Glorified” (below). As a musician, I love this text because it's one of few hymns texts that focuses on the importance of music! However, that notion really just scratches the surface of the text's meaning.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (the rule book on the Mass) says that the first two purposes of the opening hymn are “*to open the celebration, foster the unity of those who have been gathered.*” The first stanza of this hymn does just that, as it calls us to set aside our human pride and join with all creation in praising God with one unified “Alleluia!”

One of the reasons music, particularly liturgical music, means so much to me is that it transforms emotions into words. It takes profound feelings of grief, sorrow, joy, happiness, and whatever else, and expresses them perfectly. This can happen whether we're listening to music or singing as an assembly. Through music, we

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discover “new dimensions in the world of sound” (stanza 2), and our worship is made even more profound by these discoveries. Stanza 4 echoes these themes, as it reminds us of the long standing importance of singing in our faith. Even with the looming fate of the crucifixion, Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn after the passover meal, the last supper.

Stanza 3 proudly declares that, even through human sinfulness, the Church has withstood the test of time. Through our faith and dedication to praising God in community, we have persisted in sharing the Truth of Jesus Christ with the world. It’s important to remember this and to be encouraged by it. As Jesus says in the gospel, *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”* We forget the power we invoke by simply walking into the doors of church on Sunday! Our presence and participation in the Mass through spoken and sung prayer, response, and acclamation unifies us as the Body of Christ, and summons Christ to be present to us in Word and Sacrament.

So – let us be reconciled to one another. And let us together raise our voices in praise and worship of God, asking him to continue to give us the gift of faith which leads us to sing his praises in the Mass.

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1. When in our mu - sic God is glo - ri - fied,
2. How of - ten, mak - ing mu - sic, we have found
3. So has the Church, in lit - ur - gy and song,
4. And did not Je - sus sing a psalm that night
5. Let ev - 'ry in - stru - ment be tuned for praise!



And ad - o - ra - tion leaves no room for pride,
A new di - men - sion in the world of sound,
In faith and love, through cen - tu - ries of wrong,
When ut - most e - vil strove a - gainst the light?
Let all re - joice who have a voice to raise!



It is as though the whole cre - a - tion cried:
As wor - ship moved us to a more pro - found
Borne wit - ness to the truth in ev - 'ry tongue:
Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
And may God give us faith to sing al - ways:



Al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000, © 1972, Hope Publishing Company
Tune: ENGELBERG, 10 10 10 with alleluia; Charles V. Stanford, 1852–1924