

Reflections from the Upper Room:

for the Pastoral Musician

Sunday, May 10, 2020

Reflections for the 5th Sunday of Easter

By: Anthony Nardino, *Director of Sacred Music,*
St. Peter the Apostle University & Community Parish,
and The Catholic Center at Rutgers University



In my relationship with Sacred Scripture, I have often found that words of Holy Gospel according to St. John have a particular power in allowing me to hear the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ speak directly to me. I experience this most notably in the vivid dialogues offered to us on the pages of this sacred text. The intimate and honest conversation between Christ and Martha, following the death of Lazarus, comes to mind (John 11):

Martha: Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

Jesus: Your brother will rise.

Martha: I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.

Jesus: I am the resurrection and life... Do you believe this?

Martha: Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

In today's Gospel reading (John 14), we hear another intimate conversation, this time between Jesus and his disciples. In it, the disciples hear a word of comfort from the lips of the One in whom they put their trust. It was a word that they sorely needed to hear.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me."

Is this not a word that we sorely need to hear as well?

But what was the context of this statement? At what point in the greater narrative did Our Lord choose to use these poignant words of care? It was in fact at a time when the disciples were filled with feelings similar to those of our own: feelings of anxiety, disturbance, unrest. It was the night before the Passion, at the table of the Last Supper. The weeks leading up to this Passover supper were a slow boil of uncertainty and tension. Even in the preceding moments, on the lips of Christ were predictions of betrayal, abandonment, and death. It was in this context of turmoil that Jesus steadied the storm. He looked through the eyes and into the hearts of his beloved disciples and whispered the words he still speaks to us this very day:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God: have faith also in me.”

Let him speak to your heart. Let him steady your storm. As I allow these words to grow my seed of faith and to increase my trust in the Lord, I have been praying with this hymn text written by Katharina von Schlegel in the 18th century and beautifully translated by Jane L. Borthwick in the 19th century. May it serve you as well.

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;
bear patiently the cross of grief of pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
in every change, He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heav'nly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
to guide the future, as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
his voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart,
and all is darkened in the veil of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul: thy Jesus can repay
from his own fullness all He takes away.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hast'ning on
when we shall be forever with the Lord.
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past.
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Selected Reflection Music

In My Father's House

By: Philip Stopford

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x85pgTfE3c>

Contributor Introduction

Anthony Nardino has been Director of Sacred Music at St. Peter the Apostle University & Community Parish and the Catholic Center Campus Ministry to Rutgers University since 2008. He has a Bachelor of Music degree with a sub-concentration in Theology from The Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. Anthony also contributes to the world of pastoral music through composition and instrumental arrangement.

Thomas DeLessio

Diocesan Coordinator for Liturgical Music

Director of Music, St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral