

Singing Our Faith 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time – October 21, 2018

Given the current state of the Church, we should hear this Sunday's readings in a new context. Amid crisis in our leadership, more than ever we need to remind ourselves that our trust is not in princes or men (Psalm 118), but in Jesus Christ, the founder of our Church. The concluding words of Sunday's gospel reveal Jesus' vision for his Church – *“For the Son of Man did not come **to be served**, but **to serve** and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

The hymn “The Church of Christ” (found below) is so rich in speaking about what the Church, the Body of Christ, should look like. The first stanza alone speaks volumes about our stained past, how our leadership has responded (or neglected to respond) to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and how, despite flawed human leadership, the Spirit guides the Body of Christ through dark times to places of resurrection. The second stanza speaks of “victims of injustice” and their need for shelter and food. As we sing this hymn and hear these scriptures in a new light, it's easy to recognize that these victims have been oppressed within the walls of the Church. More than physical shelter and nourishment, they need the shelter and nourishment of a loving community with listening ears. The rest of the hymn is a call for the Body of Christ (that's us!) to fulfill Christ's mission of serving others.

The second reading states *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin.”* This sentiment is echoed in the third, fourth, and fifth stanzas of the hymn, which reminds us that our mission is to be centered in Christ, our high priest.

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All of us have encountered family or friends who have left the Church because of scandal, cover up, injustice, and a multitude of other reasons. Dialoguing with people who carry these burdens is challenging – balancing a listening ear while trying to give them new hope in the Church. In private, it's important to pray for these people to see the Church not in the light of its flawed, human leadership, but rather in its divine founder. You may notice that the hymn “The Church of Christ” does not mention the office of the papacy, cardinals, bishops, or any other ordained or consecrated person. Rather, all the baptized – ordained, consecrated, or not – are the Church of Christ. As we gather for the Eucharist this weekend – mindful of the victims who need healing and the perpetrators who need contrition – *let us confidently approach the throne of grace to **receive mercy** and to **find grace** for timely help.*

Stephen Eros

Director of Liturgy & Music

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The Church of Christ



1. The Church of Christ, in ev - 'ry age Be - set by
2. A - cross the world, a - cross the street, The vic - tims
3. Then let the ser - vant Church a - rise, A car - ing
4. For he a - lone, whose blood was shed, Can cure the
5. We have no mis - sion but to serve In full o -



change, but Spir - it - led, Must claim and test its her - it -
of in - jus - tice cry For shel - ter and for bread to
Church that longs to be A part - ner in Christ's sac - ri -
fe - ver in our blood, And teach us how to share our
be - dience to our Lord: To care for all, with - out re -



age And keep on ris - ing from the dead.
eat, And nev - er live un - til they die.
fice, And clothed in Christ's hu - man - i - ty.
bread And feed the starv - ing mul - ti - tude.
serve, And spread his lib - er - at - ing Word.