

Singing Our Faith

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 19, 2020

The Joy of the Gospel

G C Am D Em G/D D7 G

1. The joy of the Gos - pel in - vites us to - day,
 2. The Gos - pel per - suades us to meet Je - sus' gaze,
 3. The joy of the Gos - pel en - gag - es the heart,
 4. The Gos - pel im - pels us, with Christ at our side,

C Am D Em G/D D7 G

Be - liev - ing in Je - sus, to walk in his way:
 To let his Word touch us, de - light and a - maze.
 Em - pow - ers dis - ci - ples and gives each a part:
 Pre - pared and com - mis - sioned, with arms o - pen wide,

Em D G Em Bm G DSUS4 D

To love and serve oth - ers, the last and the least,
 The Gos - pel a - wak - ens, en - liv - ens the soul;
 To care for the poor and re - spond to their plea,
 To go forth re - joic - ing in Good News to share:

G C Am D Em G/D D7 G

To be for our world both the salt and the yeast.
 It kin - dles the spir - it, makes new and makes whole.
 To lift up the low - ly, from bur - dens set free.
 God's love is for all and ex - tends ev - 'ry - where!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b.1939, © 2016, GIA Publications, Inc.
 Tune: ST. DENIO, 11 11 11 11; adapt. from a Welsh ballad in John Roberts' *Hymns of the Sanctuary*, 1839

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Each year, the beginning of Ordinary Time is marked by scriptures that tell of the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry—this year we begin with St. John’s account of John the Baptist announcing Jesus as the “Lamb of God.” The first reading and the psalm point to the revelation of Jesus, the divine Son of God, for whom the prophets had longed. In these early Sundays in Ordinary Time, the scriptures lay out a template for us to reflect on and grow in our discipleship over the next several weeks.

The hymn “The Joy of the Gospel” is set to the Welsh tune *St. Denio* (an version of the name *Denis*) which dates back to the 19th century. Set in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the tune is in ballad form, meaning the first, second, and fourth lines of music are similar, and the third line is completely different. Despite the amount of leaps in the melody, it’s a very catchy and singable tune. The ascending theme in the melody exudes excitement and joy—an appropriate match for the hymn text.

Penned by contemporary hymnist and composer Sr. Delores Dufner, OSB, the text is no doubt inspired by Pope Francis’ exhortation of the same name, “*Evangelii gaudium*”—one of his earliest writings as pontiff. You’ll notice Sr. Delores’ excessive use of verbs in this text. Almost every line of every stanza is a different action to which the gospel calls us. While some of these actions are challenging, they all lead to a true sense of **joy**—one of the paradoxes of our faith.

The Mass is not entertainment or a spectator sport. It’s a spiritual masterclass that causes us to examine both our interior life and how

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we're living out the truths of our faith. If we leave Mass every week feeling comfortable, warm, and fuzzy, something isn't right. The living and effective Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) should stir us to go deeper and make changes that put us in right relationship with God, ourselves, and one another. A Word that is living should not be responded to with complacency. This is the message of the Mass and this is the message of "The Joy of the Gospel." As we venture into Ordinary Time, we observe new ways in which we can conform to the life of Jesus. In closing, I offer the excerpt below from Pope Francis' *The Joy of the Gospel*, which begins with a quote from Pope Benedict XVI...

"Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." (Pope Benedict XVI) Thanks solely to this encounter—or renewed encounter—with God's love, which blossoms into an enriching friendship, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization. For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?"

Stephen Eros

Director of Liturgy & Music