

Singing Our Faith

3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – January 26, 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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Occasionally, the readings of the Lectionary line up so we hear an Old Testament prophecy followed by its fulfillment in the Gospel. This Sunday is one of those days. I highly recommend listening to Scott Hahn’s reflection on the readings, which provides great historical context for what we will hear. **[Click here for that reflection.](#)**

Jesus calls the first disciples in Sunday’s gospel reading as he passes through Galilee. **Peter, a simple fisherman living in a rural region, has absolutely no idea what he’s getting himself into.** He’s about to commit to follow a radical leader who will be hated by those in power; his teachings are controversial, and even appear to be blasphemous; his followers are a little sketchy—tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, women, the infirmed, and many others deemed “not worthy” by society. Through the gospels, we hear of Peter’s bold loyalty—*“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.”* (John 6:68-69)—yet he denies Jesus out of grave fear during his passion. Peter is the one on whom Jesus will build his Church, the same Church of which we are members. In the end, he is executed by crucifixion. And it all started with this scene, *“Jesus called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.”*

Many of the holy men and women whom we venerate as Saints have similar stories—some are just as dramatic as Peter’s. Whether we were baptized as an infant or initiated through the RCIA, we are like Peter. **Who really knows what they’re in for when they rise from**

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the waters of baptism? Growing up, we see quaint images of Jesus ministering—white skin, well-groomed hair and beard, a clean tunic, etc.—and at some point, we realize that there is so much more beyond this. It gets pretty messy, and in a world that is almost completely detached from the message of Jesus, it only gets messier. Like Peter and all the Saints, we are faced with difficult choices all throughout our life—the world vs. the Word.

These challenges are presented as joys in the hymn “The Joy of the Gospel.” Some might consider this very strange. I think the best example of this challenge/joy paradox is a monetary community. If you’ve ever encountered sisters, brothers, or priests who live in a religious community, the pure joy that they have is almost immediately noticeable. It’s striking that people who have given up so many exterior pleasures have an interior life that is bursting from fulfillment. We are called to a life of challenges and difficult choices, but full of pure joy because we are rooted in the one and only thing that truly matters.

Stephen Eros

Director of Liturgy & Music

Part of last’s week’s reflection on the same hymn...

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,

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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.

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?”