

Connecting Music to Mass
October 2 2016

Today's readings are found at #1172 in the hymnal.

Today's readings lead us to reflect on the trust and loyalty we have for God, which points ultimately to our faith in him, and how we serve him because of that faith.

The first reading is divided into two parts: the plea of the prophet, and the response of God. The plea is lengthy, colorful, and dramatic – obviously there are serious concerns to address! Rather than trusting God, he is convinced that the Lord is choosing to ignore the plea. The lesson here can be found in the last sentence of the Lord's response – “The rash one has no integrity; but the just one, **because of his faith**, shall live.”

Moving to the gospel, the apostles say to Jesus, “Increase our faith!” Jesus' answer leads to examining the **quality** of our faith rather than the **quantity**. In other words, praying often is great – but if our prayer is focused on frivolous or material desires rather than, for instance, our desire to know God, then the quality (not the quantity) of our prayer is lacking.

The opening hymn “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” (#688) is a paraphrase of Psalm 90 by 18th century text writer Isaac Watts (Watts also penned the beloved Christmas carol “Joy to the World”). The psalms are a great tool for prayer – King David knew how to turn even misery and anger into pray, and he gives 150 keys to unlock all human emotions to prayer. In this paraphrase of Psalm 90, we praise God *in faith* because he is our protector and guide – the constant in our life.

Trust and have faith – check. Now, St. Paul gives the second part of the equation – “...but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.” He encourages us to pray to the Holy Spirit – whom we have receive through baptism and confirmation – in our service to the Church. Trust, have faith, **and** serve willingly and generously.

We capture the element of mission in the Eucharist as we sing “Here I Am, Lord” (#777) during the communion procession. A reminder that the Eucharist is not only for personal gain; it nourishes us to be messengers of the Word to others. And as St. Paul points us to the Holy Spirit, we sing “God, whose purpose is to kindle, now ignite us with your fire...with your passion us inspire.” (#813) The next line of the text battles the “sin of indifference” that Fr. Jim reminded us of last week – “overcome our sinful **calmness**.” This spirit-filled text sends us out into the world to proclaim Christ to all – to serve willingly and generously. The final lines of stanza 3 remind us that faith guides our service – “Lift the smallness of our vision by your own abundant life!”

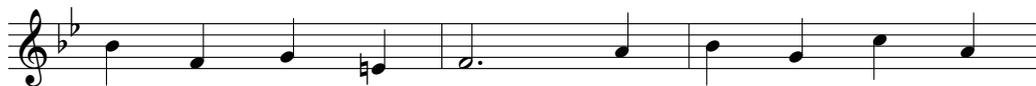
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[Click here - Sunday Readings for October 2, 2016](#)

O God, Our Help in Ages Past



1. O God, our help in a - ges past, Our
 2. Un - der the shad - ow of your throne Your
 3. Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, Or
 4. A thou - sand a - ges in your sight Are
 5. Time, like an ev - er - roll - ing stream, Bears
 6. O God, our help in a - ges past, Our



hope for years to come, Our shel - ter from the
 saints have dwelt se - cure; Suf - fi - cient is your
 earth re - ceived its frame, From ev - er - last - ing
 like an eve - ning gone, Short as the watch that
 all our years a - way; They fly for - got - ten,
 hope for years to come, Still be our guard while



storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home.
 arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
 you are God, To end - less years the same.
 ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun.
 as a dream Dies at the o - p'ning day.
 trou - bles last, And our e - ter - nal home.

Text: Psalm 90; Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.
 Tune: ST. ANNE, CM; attr. to William Croft, 1678–1727; harm. composite from 18th C. versions