

Singing Our Faith 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time – August 27, 2017

In both the first reading and the gospel, God raises up unlikely leaders to places of authority to bring honor and glory. Remember the gospel a few weeks ago when Peter doubted Jesus when he let him walk on water? Or when Peter denied Jesus three times? Or when the disciples fled in fear after the crucifixion? My favorite line of Sunday's gospel - **“Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.”** Despite his doubts, fears, and humanness, Peter's faithfulness and relationship with God revealed to him the greatest Truth of all time. It's from this moment in scripture that we celebrate the Church in our hymns this weekend.

The opening hymn “The Church's One Foundation” (below) is a tried and true classic. The text was penned by Samuel J. Stone, an Anglican priest of the 19th century. It's ironic that such a text was penned by a member of a denomination that broke off from the Catholic Church, but that's a different article for a different time!

While we often think of the “birth of the Church” happening at Pentecost, many events led up to the moment of commissioning at Pentecost. In the first stanza of the hymn, the words “she is his new creation by water and the word” carry significant scriptural meaning. We're reminded of Jesus being baptized by John, instituting the Sacrament of Baptism, and how his ministry fulfilled the word of the prophets. This line of text also calls to mind the words of St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:17 - “So whoever is [baptized] in

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Christ is a new creation.” Stanza 2 of the text continues by celebrating the graces of Baptism (her charter of salvation....) and the Eucharist (partakes one holy food). Stanza 3 recognizes that our work of unifying Christ’s body is never finished – God longs for the “consummation of peace” among all his children. Despite that toil and tribulation, the Church on earth shares **union** with God (stanza 4)! Stanza 4 also reminds us of the “**mystic, sweet communion**” we have with the saints and angels in heaven, as we celebrate the Eucharist at every Sunday liturgy. As any good hymn does, the final stanza fills us with hope and leaves us in awe of our Catholic faith!

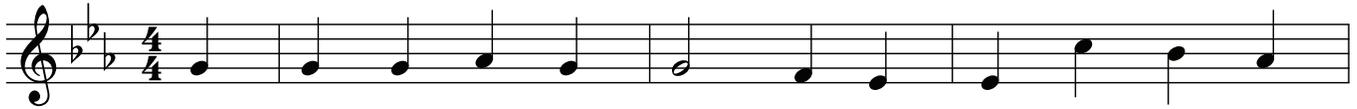
Back to Peter. St. Paul wrote in today’s second reading, “**Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!**” God’s wisdom was at work when he chose Peter as the head of the Church. From Peter, despite toil and tribulation, the beautiful Universal Church exists today to bring others to Christ, to save and heal with the sacraments, and to rejoice with the heavenly chorus every time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. Let us never take for granted God’s incredible gift of the Church on earth!

Stephen Eros

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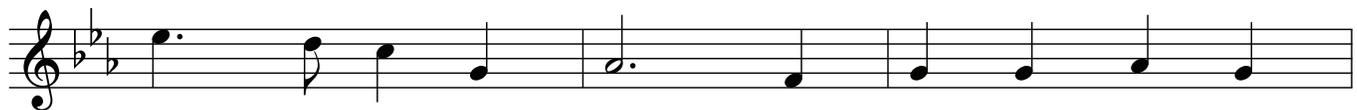
1. The Chur-ch's one foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ, her
 2. E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the
 3. Through toil and trib - u - la - tion And tu - mult of her
 4. Yet she on earth has u - nion With God, the Three in



Lord; She is his new cre - a - tion By wa - ter
 earth; Her char - ter of sal - va - tion: One Lord, one
 war She waits the con - sum - ma - tion Of peace for -
 One, And mys - tic sweet com - mun - ion With those whose



and the Word. From heav'n he came and sought her To
 faith, one birth. One ho - ly name she bless - es, Par -
 ev - er - more Till with the vi - sion glo - rious Her
 rest is won. O bless - ed heav'n - ly cho - rus! Lord,



be his ho - ly bride; With his own blood he
 takes one ho - ly food, And to one hope she
 long - ing eyes are blessed, And the great Church vic -
 save us by your grace That we, like saints be -



bought her, And for her life he died.
 press - es With ev - 'ry grace en - dued.
 to - rious Shall be the Church at rest.
 fore us, May see you face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900, alt.
 Tune: AURELIA, 7 6 7 6 D; Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–1876