

Singing Our Faith 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time – August 20, 2017

As many of you know, the scriptures were not often read by Catholics before the Second Vatican Council. One of the geniuses of the council was elevating the prominence of scripture in the liturgy, and even more so, the way they're structured and presented in the three-year lectionary cycle. The gospel reading is the central focus of the Liturgy of the Word – the other scriptures are built around that.

Today's gospel and first reading focus on salvation and what it takes to earn it. The “sub-lessons” are about our judgement of others, and God's gift of abundant mercy.

In the first reading, the Prophet Isaiah tells us to whom God's salvation will come – “The **foreigners** who join themselves to the LORD, ministering to him, loving the name of the LORD, and becoming his servants.” In the second reading, St. Paul concludes with a most powerful statement - “For God delivered all to disobedience, that he might have mercy upon **all**.” In the gospel reading, the disciples dismiss the woman who seeks Jesus for the healing of her daughter. After her **persistence**, Jesus grants the woman healing. These three passages teach us that salvation and mercy come through our faithfulness to God and his commandments, and that we should withhold our own judgements on who should be offered these gifts.

Our opening hymn, “Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace,” (below, pg. 3) leads us into the Mass by calling us to let go of grudges, focus on our own faithfulness, and to love all people as “our kindred, whom God's love has bought.” The idea of “Universal Salvation” is that God's salvation is accessible to all who seek him with a contrite heart.

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As we go forth from Mass, the hymn “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy” (below, pg. 4) reiterates this message of Universal Salvation - “There is **plentiful** redemption the blood that has been shed.” In the second stanza the phrase, “For the love is God is broader than the measures of the mind,” reminds us that it’s not our job to comprehend God’s mercy, but simply to receive it with thanksgiving! The third stanza gives us a dialogue to take out into the world. As we encounter “troubled souls” and “foolish hearts” who have, for whatever reason, disconnected themselves from God, it’s our job as disciples to welcome them back to Mass and the sacraments to receive grace, mercy, and healing.

Both of these hymn texts are loaded with meanings far beyond what I have pulled out in the paragraphs above. I invite you to take a few minutes to see how these texts relate to **you, your experiences, and where you are in your faith journey**. It’s through this type of reflection that we gain a deeper understanding of the words we speak, sing, and hear in the Mass – and *then* our hearts are open even more to the graces we receive within the most important hour of our week.

Stephen Eros
Director of Liturgy & Music

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Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace



1. Lord of all na - tions, grant me grace To love all
2. Break down the walls that would di - vide Your chil - dren,
3. For - give me, Lord, where I have erred By love - less
4. Give me your cour - age, Lord, to speak When - ev - er
5. With your own love may I be filled, And by your



peo - ple, ev - 'ry race, To see each per - son as I
Lord, on ev - 'ry side. My neigh - bor's good let me pur -
act and thought - less word. Make me to see the wrong I
strong op - press the weak. Should I my - self as vic - tim
Ho - ly Spir - it willed, That all whose lives are touched by



ought, My kin - dred, whom your love has bought.
sue; Let Chris - tian love bind warm and true.
do Will cru - ci - fy my Lord a - new.
live, Re - mem - b'ring you, may I for - give.
mine May know your heal - ing touch di - vine.

Text: Philippians 2:1–18; Olive W. Spannaus, b.1916, © 1969, 1997, Concordia Publishing House
Tune: BEATUS VIR, LM; Slovak; harm. by Richard Hillert, 1923–2010

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There's a Wideness in God's Mercy



1. There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy Like the wide-ness
2. For the love of God is broad-er Than the meas-ures
3. Trou-bled souls, why will you scat-ter Like a crowd of



of the sea; There's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice
of the mind; And the heart of the E-ter-nal
fright-ened sheep? Fool-ish hearts, why will you wan-der



Which is more than lib-er-ty. There is plen-ti-
Is most won-der-ful-ly kind. If our love were
From a love so true and deep? There is wel-come



ful re-demp-tion In the blood that has been shed;
but more faith-ful, We should rest up-on God's word;
for the sin-ner, And more grac-es for the good;



There is joy for all the mem-bers
And our lives would be thanks-giv-ing
There is mer-cy with the Sav-ior,



In the sor-rows of the Head.
For the good-ness of our Lord.
There is heal-ing in his blood.