



ARTICLE 4

GATHER

DECEMBER 2021 • SAINT PATRICK CHURCH, CARLISLE PA • FATHER DON

"We ask the people at Saint Patrick's to GATHER to worship God through The Word and The Eucharist."

Music

When is the last time you sang a song for someone? I don't mean a rousing song at a big sporting event (although who can forget "Country Roads" at WVU or "Sweet Caroline" at Fenway Park). I mean a personal song, offered up as a gift to a person you love or respect. Have you sung Happy Birthday to your parent? A love song to your spouse? A lullaby to a child?

Every Sunday at mass, we are presented with the opportunity to offer our voice in song to royalty, to divinity, and - hopefully - to someone we love. Every Sunday, we enter the court of a King, the Lord of heaven and earth; the court of noble lady, the Queen Mother of God - and we offer them gifts from the fruits of our labor, prayers like a bouquet of flowers, and music. "He who sings well prays twice," says St. Augustine and, "singing is what the lover does."

But perhaps our voice is rough or shrill and we are afraid our song is not good enough for the heavenly court. Fear not, we are not asked to sing a solo, but to join a choir, to mingle our single voice with a multitude of other voices, to represent the oneness of the Body of Christ in a unison of choral praise. We are even assured that the angels will make up the deficiencies of our song, for they continually "praise [God's] majesty, Dominions adore and Powers tremble before [Him]. Heaven and the Virtues of heaven and the blessed Seraphim worship together with exultation. May our voices, we pray, join with theirs in humble praise..."

Yet why a song? Why does singing have primacy over the musical offering of the little drummer boy from the Christmas carol, who makes the Christ-child smile with his "pa-rum-pa-pum-pum?" It is because a song has words, and our Catholic religion is one of words, language, and ideas, a faith of the Word, Who is a lamp to our feet, a light to our paths, Who points

us to the eternal Light. In the words of the popes "God has given us the Word and the sacred liturgy offers us words; we must enter into the words, into their meaning and receive them within us, we must attune ourselves to these words; in this way we become children of God, we become like God." As we begin to fit our voices to the melodies of church songs, we begin to soak into ourselves the meaning of the words, thus preparing us to give back to God the glory that is His due, in words given to us by Himself.

So when you come to mass and the strains of the song begins, remember that Christ is before you enthroned in his tabernacle, really and substantially present, that heaven is touching earth and that you can render him the worship he is due, as you raise your prayer in song.

"Liturgical worship is given a more noble form when it is celebrated in song... the unity of hearts is more profoundly achieved by the union of voices, minds are more easily raised to heavenly things by the beauty of the sacred rites, and the whole celebration more clearly prefigures that heavenly liturgy which is enacted in the holy city of Jerusalem." From Musicam Sacram of Vatican II

Until then, reflect on these things.....

- How does singing the Mass assist your participation in the Sacred Mysteries?
- How do you understand and appreciate singing the Mass as a strengthening of our faith in God's word and actions in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy?
- How do you understand and appreciate singing the Mass as a sign of the community of the Church celebrating glory and praise of God in the death and resurrection of the Lord?

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