

TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 32.
August 06, 2023
Proper 13

Revisiting Notes on the Liturgy 3

Music and Silence

“I will sing praises to my God while I have my being!” (Ps. 146 v.1)

“But I still my soul and make it quiet, like a child upon its mother’s breast: my soul is quieted within me.” (Ps 131 v. 3)

For some reason, since the dawn of history, we humans have expressed our deepest emotions –love, awe and wonder, sorrow and joy, loneliness and belonging in song or in song’s sister, silence. No wonder then that music and silence are among the most important elements of any liturgy. Every strand of Christianity has its own musical tradition (except perhaps the Quakers), from Baptist hymns, to Coptic chants, and most have a place for silence (especially perhaps the Quakers). Participation in congregational singing and in communal silence offers the laity one of the most direct means of participation in the liturgy.

Music in the context of the Eucharist must always be participatory; it cannot be allowed to become ‘entertainment.’ The hymns and chants we sing together, even the anthems, psalms and canticles sung by the choir alone, are prayers offered to God, not performances for some ‘audience’ – which is why do not applaud the choir for a well-sung anthem; at most, we whisper ‘amen.’ Silence must also participatory. It provides us a chance to reflect individually but as part of the gathered people of God on what has been read or sung, or done. So used, silence can be a profound source of unity.

In our Anglican tradition, the communal singing of hymns, the choir’s anthems, the chanted dialog and prayer, the organ interludes, are all powerful reminders that when we gather to worship, we are entering another realm, another reality, one radically different from our day to day life, a reality in which beauty is a central value.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK:

Laurence, Deacon at Rome, 10 August. The sources for the martyrdom of Laurence are among the earliest, though the details are thin. Laurence was one of the seven deacons at Rome and closely associated with Pope Sixtus II, martyred just a few days before him. His examiners insisted he produce the Church treasures. He promptly did so: assembling all the poor, he is reputed to have said, "These are the treasures of the Church." The story of his being put to death on a gridiron is a much later addition to his story. He died on this day in the year 258.

Clare of Assisi, 11 August. Born in 1193 in Assisi of a wealthy family, Clare caught the joy of a new vision of the gospel from Francis' preaching. Escaping from home, first to the Benedictines and then to a Béguine-style group, she chose a contemplative way of life when she founded her own community, which lived in corporate poverty understood as dependence on God, with a fresh, democratic lifestyle. Clare became the first woman to write a religious Rule for women, and in it showed great liberty of spirit in dealing with earlier prescriptions. During the long years after Francis' death, she supported his earlier companions in their desire to remain faithful to his vision, as she did. Some of her last words were: "Blessèd be God, for having created me."

Congratulations!

Rhasty Galap, Joederick Biag & Carl Macli

for graduating with

HIGH HONORS!