

COME. LET US SING & CELEBRATE WITH GOD
THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE
34th Sunday in Ordinary time ~ 22 November 2020



LAST SUNDAY & THE SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

Today we celebrate the last Sunday of the Church Year –

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

Next week we begin *Advent*, preparing for Christmas.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 25:31-46 | THE LAST JUDGEMENT

The Gospel today, Matthew 25:31-46 is called the *Last Judgement*.

It reminds us that we are called to love and care for our neighbour.

We care for Jesus in our caring for others -
especially our caring for the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger,
the naked, the sick, those in prison.

Last week Pope Francis helped us to focus
on an outstretched arm to others in need,
as we commemorated the [*Fourth World Day of the Poor*](#).

The hymns that we sing today and our prayer petitions
focus on the poor and on advocacy and love.

The homily today on this major feast,
this celebration of our faith and love,
will focus on praying to God
through the prayer of song and music.

I still remember several decades ago,
my first occasions when I went to Mass being celebrated

- on Bathurst Island in the Tiwi language,
- in Wadeye in the Murinthpatha language

and learning to pray The Lord's Prayer in language at Minjerriba, listening to Aboriginal Elders in their introductions to the Word of God at Sunday Mass in Cherbourg, and sharing across First Peoples traditions at Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Catholic Council (AICC) Conferences.

SONGS & HYMNS & PSALMS TO GOD

In the Bible we have psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. A very important part of our relationship with God is in song. The songs vary in length from the longer *Song of Songs* to a brief verse elsewhere.

There are hymns in both the Old and New Testament. Some are introduced, and others can be identified by their structure. And for the last two thousand years, new melodies have been written for them and for other parts of God's Word.

The Eastern and Western lungs of the Church have developed new ways of singing the Scriptures. Monastic traditions have given ways of singing together in praise of God.

Composers over the centuries, have shared their gifts in helping us to pray.

SAINT EPHREM

One of the most prolific composers was Saint Ephrem in the 4th Century. A few hundred of his hymns remain. Many of his hymns were written for all-female choirs. Saint Ephrem, as a theologian, was able to share his theological insights and teachings through music.

And in his homilies, he could write them in verse.

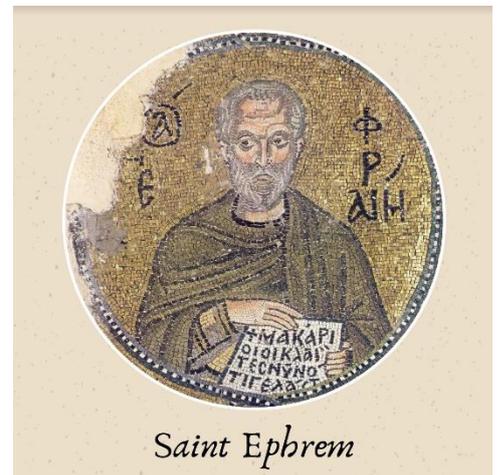
In our parish family community, we are blessed to have members from many nations and languages. Some have kept the language of Aramaic alive and sing ancient hymns in Aramaic at special times at Mass.

We are blessed in our community to have musicians and singers who help us to pray through music.

SING A NEW SONG TO GOD

Sometimes there are new songs. Sometimes God puts the words on the mouth of the singer. Sometimes the whole of creation is invited to praise God. Sometimes the musician acknowledges that creation praises God continually.

From the Bible we hear:



St. Ephrem, 11th century mosaic

Psalm 33.3 *'Sing to him a new song; play skilfully on the strings, with loud shouts.'*

Psalm 40.3 *'He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.'*

Psalm 96.1 *'O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.'*

Psalm 98.1 *'O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things.'*

Psalm 144.9 *'I will sing a new song to you, O God; upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you'*

Psalm 149.1 *'Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful.'*

Isaiah 42.10 *'Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!'*

Judith 16.13 *'I will sing to my God a new song:*

O Lord, you are great and glorious, wonderful in strength, invincible.'

Revelation 5.9 *'They sing a new song:'*

Revelation 14.3 *'and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures*

and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand

who have been redeemed from the earth.'

PSALM 23

The Psalms are to be sung.

The most well-known psalm sung in our parish

is Psalm 23 – The Lord is My Shepherd.

There are several versions of such a popular hymn.

Psalm 23 is today's Psalm for the Solemnity.

We have already sung Psalm 23 together.

Let us now say the psalm together, slowly and reflectively.

*'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,*

*and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.'*

PRAISING GOD

There are different types of psalms.
In psalms 47 and 98, we gain insight into the energy
behind the singing of some of the psalms of praise.

Psalm 47:5-7

*'God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
For God is the king of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm.'*

Psalm 98/1a, 4-6

*'O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvellous things.*

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.'*

SINGING A NEW SONG TO GOD IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Thank you to Phil, Jess, Gaby and Steve for the new hymns
you have composed and which you have taught our community.
We are blessed as a community by your giftedness.

Let us listen to them as they describe their songwriting.

PHIL



*'For many people, music and singing is a thread that links our
mind to people and places that we may not even consciously
remember. Singing in church often reminds me of the many
wonderful people I've sung with on so many occasions over the
years, and how my journey in faith has been nourished by them,
as much as by the words and melodies.*

*I like to think that my musical adaptation of some scripture
passages might make those passages accessible to some people.
And perhaps the Mass of Welcome, (the collection of sung parts
of the Mass, that this parish has been using for a while now), might reach beyond this parish
one day.*

I also like to think that one day those few compositions might become a thread of connection for someone else to scripture and our community, and maybe help them on their faith journey as well.'

JESS



'Music is a way to give praise to God. The melody gives meaning and depth to God's word. Composing music is one way of bringing God's word to life. It allows yourself and others to tap into the word in another modality.

Music is a form of prayer. I find music can move you in a different way to hear God's voice and our calling.

Sometimes you are just struck with the words and the melody, and other times it takes time. A key word or phrase or theme is often the start and I often start with the lyrics.

Next I ponder what melody will capture the message.

What melody will be easy for the congregation. How can you lead another to prayer?

I find it rewarding to lead others in prayer through song.'

GABBY & STEVE



...music a powerful part of our prayer life...

Both Steve and I find music and song a very powerful tool for connecting with God in prayer. Many times the words of the Psalms in particular are brought to mind as we spend times in worship; as these are songs of praise, songs of petition, songs of intercession & even songs of lament; that have been sung by many of God's holy people...

There is always something that resonates with you, whatever kind of

day you're having... & the way the Psalms have been written, like poems, make them easy to sing when you can't find the words.

Personally, we find that music and song connects us with God & sometimes the prayers that you sing go so much deeper than the words you would ever speak in prayer; there's just something about music that connects your heart directly with the heart of God.

As St Augustine once said, "To Sing is to pray twice".

Thanks and blessings, Gabby.

JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES SANG PRAYERFULLY

In Mark's Gospel, chapter 14, and in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 26, Jesus gathers his disciples to celebrate the Passover, and gives us himself in the Eucharist at the Lord's Supper.

Particular psalms were sung at the Passover.

Mark's Gospel 14:26 and Matthew's Gospel 26:30

inform us that after the Last Supper, they sang the hymn.

'When they had sung the hymn,

they went out to the Mount of Olives.' MK 14:26; MT 26:30

THE HALLEL

The **Hallel** is the grouping of Psalms 113 – 118,

and is sung at special liturgical feasts and commemorations, including the Passover.

Another psalm, Psalm 136 is known as the **Great Hallel**,

and was known to be sung on the last day of Passover.

Jesus would have sung psalms with others as part of Jewish prayer rituals.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The early Christian community were invited to sing in prayer to God.

In the Letter to the Ephesians, early Christians were asked to be filled with the Spirit,

'as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves,

singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,

giving thanks to God the Father at all times

and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Eph 5:19-20

In the Letter to the Colossians we hear:

'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;

teach and admonish one another in all wisdom;

and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed,

do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,

giving thanks to God the Father through him.' Col 3:16-17

In one instance in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Silas are in prison.

They turn to God in prayer:

'About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God,

and the prisoners were listening to them' Acts 16:25

Whatever is happening in our lives, whatever our thoughts and feelings, we can sing prayerfully to God.

Today on this *Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe*,

and last Sunday of this Church Year, let us sing and celebrate with God.

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/112220.cfm>