

SOUNDS

of

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O God, who before the passion of thy only-begotten Son didst reveal his glory upon the holy mount: Grant unto us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FROM THE RECTOR

Someone recently gave me an issue of a British magazine featuring articles on secondary schools in the United Kingdom. The school that caught my interest was Christ's Hospital School. Located in West Sussex outside London, this school was founded in 1552 when King Edward VI was inspired by a sermon preached by Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, on the Christian's duty to help the poor of the city. (Bishop Latimer was burned at the stake under the unfortunate rule of Mary Tudor.) Since its founding this school has established a sterling record, and is justly proud of the educational opportunities it provides. Fewer than 3% of their pupils pay – or could afford to pay – the steep tuition. Offering a fine education regardless of ability to pay was one of the principles upon which that school was founded. Such philanthropy can be one of the blessings of independent education.

What caught my eye was this tenet in the Christ's Hospital School mission statement: "It is and shall be the mission of Christ's Hospital in perpetuity...to present to its pupils the Christian faith in all its mystery and splendour." Take a moment to let that sink in: "The Christian faith in all its mystery and splendour."

On the school's website, that principle is expanded in a familiar way: "In the 21st Century such an intention can only be realized with a sensitive understanding and inclusive approach to the task of commending Christ's gospel to members of the School." As refreshing as is the acknowledgement of the Christian Faith's "mystery and splendour," so the caveat with its reference to "a sensitive understanding and inclusive approach" fits seamlessly into the overall mission expressed.

The ubiquitous virtues of Episcopal schools in this country are the usual suspects: Diversity, inclusivity, spirituality. To be sure, each of those represents in part honorable aspects of mission. Still, a school which trades on the notion of being an Episcopal school would do well to put forward its own commitment to the "mystery and splendour" of the Faith entrusted to us without apology.

In the days when this parish ran a day school, the Head and I were advised by someone who worked in the national church office not to use the word "Christian" in our publications. It was held that "Christian school" had a connotation somewhere between a racial segregation academy and a fundamentalist elementary school. Far better, we were told, would it be to stress our "Episcopal identity". Was the implication that an explicitly Christian identity was perforce inimical to diversity and inclusivity? It would seem that Christ's Hospital School has not found it so. To the contrary, is there any city in the world with greater human diversity than London? Christ's Hospital goes on to make this remarkable assertion: "The contribution to the formation of pupils at every stage of their school careers by the instilling of Christian principles and ideals should not be underestimated."

Parents who entrust their children to Episcopal schools have every right to expect as much of any school which purports to be an Episcopal school. By the same token, those who enter the doors of an Episcopal church have every right to expect a commendation of the "the Christian faith in all its mystery and splendour." One suspects that in the Episcopal Church of our day such is too often a consummation more devoutly to be wished than experienced.

MOMS OF ST FRANCIS COMING TOGETHER

Are you a mother of preschool and elementary school children? Then please join us!

Several St. Francis moms are forming a group to foster fellowship and service among our moms of young children. We will aim for a fun gathering once a month, but want your input on what you would like the group to do. Please come for a planning session at 7:30 pm on March 10th at Karen Schneider's home. We'll have light refreshments, brainstorm group names, and gather ideas for meetings, discussions, and service projects.

Please RSVP to the church office (301-365-2055) by March 8th. For more information, please contact Karen Schneider at karen.schneider5@verizon.net or Maureen Martin at mmartin117@gmail.com.

THE THRIFT SALE APPROACHES

Now is the time to start spring cleaning and set aside your gently used items for the thrift sale on **Friday and Saturday, March 25th and 26th.**

We accept jewelry, clothes, shoes, purses, toys, books, tapes & DVDs, housewares, holiday items, small furniture, bedding, pictures and so much more.

This year we will be featuring the "Children's Shop" in addition to our very popular "Boutique" and large general sale.

If you have nothing to donate, you can still be a part of the fun we have getting ready for the sale. We need volunteers! We sort, we price, we fold, and we have a lot of fun doing it. Lunch is provided daily.

Please call Beth Higgins @ 301-294-3344 or Mary Ashworth @ 301-251-9255 for more information.

JOY AND CONCERN

Congratulations to Nathan and Kendall Cummings on the birth of their son, Nathan.

WHO ARE THE PASTORAL VISITORS?

The Pastoral Visitors are a small group of parishioners who want to be in contact with those of you who are homebound, who have experienced or are experiencing difficult times and who might need help in finding appropriate services for health issues, home aides and other services either permanent or temporary. All Pastoral Visitors have had training by clergy, a social worker and a psychologist. We meet on a monthly basis to support and advise one another and to pray for those we are visiting. A few of us have been licensed as Pastoral Eucharistic Visitors and can bring communion to those who are unable to attend church services, those who are homebound, in nursing and rehabilitation facilities, and in hospital.

It is very important that those parishioners who cannot attend church experience that they are a part of our family and a member of the body of Christ. It is equally important that those who are experiencing difficult times know that there are parishioners who care, who can listen, and perhaps help to meet some of their needs.

Perhaps you know of a parishioner or parishioners who might benefit from a talk with or a visit from one of us. Let us know and we will discreetly follow up. The Pastoral Visitors are here for you if and when you need us. We reach out in the name of and for the love of Jesus Christ! Please call Sue Tull (301-299-8799), Don Harrison (301-424-0229), or the Parish Office (301-365-2055) to contact us.

LISTEN UP!

Last installment, I left you with a list of hymns by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) with the promise of surveying a few of them to see what makes them so successful musically. RVW proved himself immensely capable of producing memorable original tunes and useful adaptations of folk melodies, which have become staples in almost every traditional Christian hymnal. His impact on 20th century hymnody cannot be equaled in the musical realms and there is no doubt in my mind that he will remain one of the all-time giants of this genre.... world without end. Amen.

So, what does make a “good” hymn, particularly for a congregation to sing? Admittedly, one would be hard pressed to come up with a more subjective question than that. But there are some fairly objective musical observations we can make in identifying a successful setting. And for the sake of our discussion here, let us agree that a text theologically sound and poetically beautiful is a given.

Such is the case with HYMN 287, *For all the saints*, arguably one of the finest hymns of the entire 20th century. Can anyone now imagine the first Sunday of November (when we mark the Feast of All Saints’ Day) not singing this great hymn? I dare say the objections to its omission would be louder than the “Alleluia, alleluia!” that concludes each verse.

RVW wrote his tune specifically for this processional hymn text by 19th century Anglican Bishop, William How (1823-1897). It was crafted for inclusion in the new English Hymnal of 1906, which RVW edited. This tune replaced an older setting by none other than Sir Joseph Barnby (1838-1896), one time chorister at York Minster and later precentor and director of music at Eton College. One might well hear grumblings at such an act as this. But then again, it’s doubtful there are any worthy of RVW’s great mantle in our present day to pull off such an audacity.

The name of the tune (not the text) is SINE NOMINE, which simply means “without name.” That is in reference to the Feast to which it is tied, All Saints’ (emphasis on *All*). The objective factors are these: a tune with a comfortable compass of a 9th (an octave plus one note); a logical harmonic progression with straightforward forays to the dominant and subdominant (trust me on that one!); and an unerring rhythmic drive with four even phrases of four measures each. Those are the measurable qualities and are all classic parameters of a good congregational hymn tune.

Now, let’s look at what elevates it to the status of great. Right from the beginning, RVW puts a nice artistic touch in the simple use of a rest on the first beat. The organ articulates the tonic (home key) note of ‘G’, which has the wonderful sensation of “launching” us into the first line, as though we were taking flight. The first line’s shape falls then rises. The entire second line has a downward shape and remains in the lower part of the vocal range followed by an upward tendency of the entire third line, which remains in the upper part of the range. Thereby, RVW achieves a certain irregularity within the confines of a very regular structure. The fourth line mirrors the first with an upward gesture and then a downward “settling” final cadence, giving us a very satisfying sense of balance and completeness.

One other nuance I particularly like is that each line ends on a different note, thus providing a subtle yet powerful sense of movement. But the *pièce de résistance* is the second note of the concluding “alleluias.” RVW has waited until the last line – and not unimportantly at the utterance of “alleluia” – to introduce the highest note of the tune and that only once. So simple yet so divine! Finally, a very strong element of the whole (not printed in the pew version of the hymnal) is the “walking bass” of the organ part. Composers

Continued on the reverse

Continued from the reverse

from the 17th century baroque era to the greats of the early 20th century jazz age have used this device to give that sense of strong forward momentum. How clever of RVW to have used it in a processional hymn!

Next time we'll look at some folk melodies.

Stay tuned.... Gary Davison, O-C

ARTS @ MIDDAY

THE WORLD PREMIERE OF A WORK BY GARY DAVISON
FEATURING SOLOIST JULIE KEIM

On **Friday, March 11th from 12:30-1:15**, Saint Alban's Episcopal Church (3001 Wisconsin Ave, NW) will present a program on their *Arts @ Midday* series on the poetry of Emily Dickinson.

The presentation will include a brief lecture by renowned Dickinson scholar, Judith Farr, followed by the world premiere of a song cycle called *Toward Eternity* by Gary Davison. Soprano Julie Keim will be the featured soloist. Admission is free.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

MARCH 8TH, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

Historically, Shrove Tuesday marks the beginning of Lent when the faithful were forbidden to eat meat, butter, eggs or milk. To use these items before they spoiled, they added a bit of flour and pancake treats.

Today, that tradition lives on at St. Francis. Come enjoy all the pancakes, applesauce and sausage you can eat, served by the members of our Youth Group! The proceeds will support the Youth Group's Mission Trip.

DONATION: Adults - \$6:00; Children under 12 - \$4.00; Families - \$15.00

SERVICES ON ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9TH

Holy Eucharist services will be held in St. Francis Church at 10:00 am and 6:30 pm on Ash Wednesday, March 9, 2011.

VANDERBILT CONCERT CHOIR

This Sunday, March 6th, we welcome the Vanderbilt University Concert Choir, under the direction of David Williams. They will be with us on Sunday, March 6th at both the 9:00 and 11:15 services. Approximately fifty of their students will participate in our liturgies that day, offering an array of sacred choral music from Hassler to Haydn. This will commence a weeklong tour in the DC area for them and we are privileged to host these young musicians from Nashville. -GD-

MUSIC AT EVENTIDE:

LENTEN CHORAL EVENSONG

On **Sunday, March 20th**, the third of this season's *Music at Eventide* events will take place in the form of our annual Lenten evensong. The St Anthony Boy and St Clare Girl Choirs will be joined by choristers from St Alban's Church in Washington (Sonya Sutton, Director for Parish Music Ministries), and St Thomas' Church, Whitmarsh in Pennsylvania (Cynthia DeDakis, Minister of Music).

Please note this service begins at 4:00 p.m. I hope you will put this special service on your calendar and join us. A reception will follow during which you will have an opportunity to greet the choristers and mingle with one another at leisure. -GD-

SAVE THE DATE:

Dr. Russell White, surgeon and director of Tenwek Hospital in Kenya, East Africa, will be at St. Francis on **Saturday April 16, at 8:30 am** in the Kincaid Library for an update on the hospital and Dr. White's ministry which St. Francis supports.

Dr. White will offer a power point presentation about his work and coffee and donuts will be served. Please contact Rev. Phil Ellsworth (301-365-2055) for more information.

COMING UP AT SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH

For more information, please visit our website at www.stfrancispotomac.org

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY CONCERT CHOIR SINGS

8:00 am Holy Eucharist
9:00 am Holy Eucharist
Sunday School and Adult Education
11:15 am Holy Eucharist
12:00 pm High School Small Groups

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

SHROVE TUESDAY

10:30 am Grounds Committee Meeting
5:30 pm Youth Choirs
6:30 pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper - Hall
7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

ASH WEDNESDAY

10:00 am Holy Eucharist
11:00 am Rector's Bible Study
6:30 pm Holy Eucharist

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

7:00 am Men's Bible Study
5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 3/20/11
5:30 pm Youth Bible Study
7:30 pm St Francis Choir
7:30 pm Moms of Young Children - Schneider's

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

HUNGER SUNDAY

8:00 am Holy Eucharist
9:00 am Holy Eucharist
Sunday School and Adult Education
11:15 am Morning Prayer
12:00 pm High School Small Groups

The Scripture appointed for the Last Sunday after the Epiphany
Exodus 24:12-18, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17:1-9, Psalm 2 or Psalm 99

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