

MONDAY
17 MAY
Acts 19:1-8
Psalm 68:1-6
John 16:29-end

TUESDAY
18 MAY
Acts 20:17-27
Psalm 68:9-10.
18-19
John 17:1-11

WEDNESDAY
19 MAY
Acts 20:28-end
Psalm 68:27-28.
32-end
John 17:11-19

THURSDAY
20 MAY
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
Psalm 16:1. 5-end
John 17:20-end

FRIDAY
21 MAY
Acts 25:13-21
Psalm 103:1-2. 11-12. 19-20
John 21:15-19

SATURDAY
22 MAY
Acts 28:16-20.
30-end
Psalm 11:4-end
John 21:20-end

REFLECTION

As we read the words of Jesus in our first four Gospel readings this week we may also hear in the background his words from the cross just before he died: *“Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit”* (Luke 23:46).



Jesus prays for all those who have believed in him, learnt from him and loved him. But he also prays for those who believe in him because of what those first witnesses have told them. Jesus commends all of us into his Father’s hands with heartfelt prayers:

- for our protection now that he is no longer physically guarding us in a hostile world;
- for our unity with him, with his Father and with one another; and
- that we will see the glory that has been his since before the world’s creation.

In this liminal time between the ascension of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost it’s good to reflect on these prayers of Jesus and ask ourselves how and why we have come to believe and how we live out our faith in the world. And when the going gets tough let’s remember Jesus saying, *“take courage; I have conquered the world!”*

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us to commend ourselves, mind, body and spirit, into your loving hands. Protect and guide us we pray, so that we may be at one with you and your Father and your Holy Spirit.

CHURCH MUSIC

PART III – WHAT MAKES “GOOD” LITURGICAL MUSIC?

Having established that music in worship is not there for its own sake but to support the liturgy, our next step is to think about “good” liturgical music.

Much depends on the context and the function of a particular piece of music. A musical setting of a hymn has a different function to the setting of the “Kyrie,” “Gloria” or “Agnus Dei,” for instance, which are distinct from a voluntary during a procession or a penitential rite. Each part of the service is doing something different, so there can be no “one size fits all” approach.

Having emphasised the importance of music and its ability to enhance the liturgy, it’s helpful, if sobering for a liturgical musician, to remember that when it comes to setting the official texts of the liturgy, music is not essential. The truth is that the liturgical prayers can take place very happily and successfully without any music at all, whereas you couldn’t have all of the music and none of the words.

So the words should take precedence over the music. The music should support the words, enabling them to do their job, reflecting the mood of the text and the season. It should respect and never overpower or compete with the natural literary form and shape of the prayer.

Sometimes a composer hits upon a good tune and won’t let the words of the liturgy get in the way. Sometimes it’s possible to superimpose a tune written for one text onto the words of another. This is common place in metrical hymnody, and hymn-book publishers even provide indexes to facilitate swapping tunes around. But whether a particular tune has the correct metrical framework to fit the syllabic structure of the text is only one piece of the puzzle. Does it work for every verse? Is the character of the music appropriate?

To be liturgically good the music must let the words breathe rather than stretching them into unnatural shapes. It should follow the form and shape of the words and hang from them like a well-fitting garment fits comfortably around the contours of the body. In other words, the best liturgical music is generally tailor-made.

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Seventh week of Easter

Monday 17 May to Saturday 22 May 2021

WEEK

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