

A Coffee with Alessio



Welcome back and The First Sunday of Advent

This column has unfortunately been in recess for the second half of this year due to the website for the Centre for Liturgy (CFL) being under maintenance. It would have been pointless to write a column with no medium to view it. Anyhow, the CFL has now set up a music Facebook page, and so the column will be posted on the Facebook page as well as the website each week.

This Sunday we begin a new liturgical year. 2017 has flown by! On Epiphany Sunday this year (way back on January 8), the priest read the Epiphany Proclamation. In that proclamation he read the dates for the major celebrations of the recently finished liturgical year. The last date he 'proclaimed' was the First Sunday of Advent for the next liturgical year. December 3 seemed a long way away back in January. But here it is!

Those of us in school are gearing up for end of year concerts, Masses, finishing assessments and reports amongst other activities that go on this time of the year. So, as we prepare to finish the academic year, we begin a new liturgical year.

In the Gospel this Sunday, we are reminded to be on our guard and 'stay awake' - a rather sound piece of advice for a church musician! Whilst Jesus was referring to his second coming in the Gospel Reading, I am going to take a totally different slant on that reading. We as Church musicians need to be alert to the demographics of our respective parish communities and the hymns that work well and those that don't (in them). Also, we need to be mindful of the time and place to use certain pieces of music.

Advent is a penitential season, though not in the same way as Lent. Nonetheless, I would suggest simplifying our music slightly for Advent, so that we can truly celebrate the birth

of Jesus at Christmas with all the 'bells and whistles.' Advent is also a time of year where schools use Christmas carols at concerts and people gather together for Carols by Candlelight amongst other events. Those events are wonderful for us to participate in. Just remember, in the liturgy (Mass and Office of Readings) we don't use Christmas Carols till the Vigil Mass of Christmas.

I'm going to find my light purple shirt to wear for this Sunday, and I'll work my way up to a deep purple for the Fourth Sunday of Advent. In addition, I'm going to find a nice café to chill out for a while.

Happy Advent everyone!

Alessio Loiacono
Music Field Officer

Friday 1 December 2017