

## *A Coffee with Alessio*



### **Welcome to Lent!**

As I write this column, I am mindful of what I wrote last year, so that I don't run the risk of repeating myself. I think sometimes we can run the risk of just going through the motions when we participate in annual rituals. However, each time we celebrate one of the feasts or seasons on the liturgical calendar, we should be celebrating it as though we are in the present. That is during Lent, Christ is in the desert and praying and fasting for forty days right at this point in time, just as he did two thousand years ago. We also journey with Christ during these forty days and forty nights.

Lent is my favourite time of the year, and I really want this Lent to be my best Lent ever. We all know that the three key features to the Season of Lent are prayer, penance (fasting) and almsgiving. Yet, these three things should not be done just for the sake of doing things. We really need to think seriously about how we can enact these three aspects well, so that they enrich our spiritual and daily lives. Lent is very much about decluttering and rediscovering the simple.

So, what can we do in our Liturgies with regards to music to rediscover the simplicity of Lent? I have a few suggestions for you.

Firstly, I would sing the chant *Holy* and *Lamb of God* that came out on the Mass cards with the new English translation of the Missal in 2011. These chants are very simple and easy for the people to learn and sing. If you don't have access to these cards the music for these chants is in CWB II (#11 and #17 respectively). Alternatively, you can access the music on the ICEL website

<http://icelweb.org/musicfolder/openmusic.php> and scroll down till you come to the music for the Ordinary of the Mass.

Secondly for the Great Amen at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer sing only the simple chant Amen. You can save your grand 'Great Amen' for the Easter Vigil.

Thirdly, I always use the chant settings of the Memorial Acclamations. There are some pieces of music that should be chant so that wherever we go, we can join in singing those pieces of music. For Lent, I would use the chant setting of "Save us, Saviour of the World." Keep using the same acclamation (during Lent) and people will become familiar with it. Finally, as I've mentioned before, there should be silence for the recessional at the end of Mass during Lent. In this way, go into Mass "on a high", but we go out of Mass "on a low", and with simplicity during Lent.

I like *Baci* chocolates. They are my favourite! I finished a pack on Tuesday, just in time for Lent. I will take up eating *Baci* again at Easter, just as we take up the singing of the *Alleluia* at the Easter Vigil.

I hope you have a very prayerful and fruitful Lent. May the music you use during the Liturgy this Lent help people to reflect upon what the Lord did for us, and may it help them focus on the Lord and the needs of others this Lent.

Enjoy your coffee!

Alessio Loiacono  
Friday 3 March 2017