

A Coffee with Alessio



Saint John the Baptist- Part II

A few weeks ago, I gave you the heads-up about the fact that this Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of Saint John the Baptist and so I gave you some musical suggestions to use for this Solemnity. One of the musical suggestions I gave you was “Blessed be the God of Israel”, otherwise known as the Canticle of Zechariah. This Canticle is used at Morning Prayer (Lauds) every morning. Morning Prayer is part of the Liturgy of the Hours. I will write about the Liturgy of the Hours in another column.

So, who was this character named Zechariah? He was the father of John the Baptist. In the Gospel reading this Sunday we will hear how there was a dispute about what John’s name should be. Zechariah lost his speech and did not receive it back until he wrote that his Son’s name should be John. It is appropriate therefore that the Canticle of Zechariah be using this Sunday. There are three setting of this canticle in *Catholic Worship Book II*- see #187a-c.

The Canticle of Zechariah should be our prayer also. It is a canticle of praise to the Lord, and through our music, catechesis or Religious Education lesson, we too offer thanks and praise to the Lord. John came as a bearer of the Light, and as one who prepared the way for the Lord. In the Canticle we hear: “You, my child (John), shall be called the prophet of the Most High for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.” We too, as musicians and liturgists must prepare people to meet the Lord in the Sacraments and in their daily lives through their encounter with us both inside and outside of the Church.

So, find a nice café that you can enjoy a coffee and a cake this week, hopefully with someone that you are eternally grateful to the Lord for their presence in your life. Before you have your coffee and cake you can say as your grace: “Blessed be the God of Israel, the everliving Lord.” In saying the above line, you will be giving thanks to the Lord for the blessings he has given you through family and friends.

On another note, yesterday (Thursday 21 June) was World Music Day. So, a happy 'World Music Day' to all musicians who read this column.

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