

A Coffee with Alessio



One liturgical year ends and another begins

As I mentioned in last week's column, the liturgical year is drawing to a close. This Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. On such a feast day, it's always a good idea to pull-out one of the "old favourites" like "Hail Redeemer". That will be a real curtain raiser and get the momentum going in the liturgy in terms of "full, conscious and active participation". By all means use "newer" or "contemporary" music as well. Just balance that with a hymn that everyone will know well.

Often when it comes to kingdoms and principalities, we think of a hierarchy. People in Jesus' time were no different. His "coronation ceremony" was on the Cross. His Kingdom was one of love, peace and joy. One of our tasks is to build up His Kingdom here on earth. We do that through our liturgical and musical preparation amongst other activities. That's why it's important to have one hymn that everyone will sing "with gusto" during the liturgy. Good, strong singing lifts our spirits up and should bring us closer to the Lord.

Now, when we come to Mass next Sunday we will begin a new liturgical year. It's a good idea to have the blessing of the Advent Wreath included in the liturgy next Sunday. After the Processional Hymn, the celebrant greets the people in the usual manner. After the greeting he says the blessing:

*Lord our God,
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:
he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,
he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,
he is the Saviour of every nation.*

*Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we light the candles of this wreath.
May the wreath and its light
be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.
May he come quickly and not delay.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.*

(<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-an-advent-wreath.cfm>)

After the prayer of blessing, the first violet candle is lit and the people can sing a verse of the hymn “O come, o come Emmanuel”, or you can sing the Lord have mercy. In this way, the blessing does not “delay the Mass” too long, and yet at the same time it draws our attention to the new liturgical year and season we are celebrating. You can also use the above blessing in your homes and classrooms.

So, a celebratory coffee and cake is in order this weekend as we celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King. Something like a crème brûlée seems very appropriate!

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