

# *A Coffee with Alessio*



## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time- Year A

### Lectionary:

First Reading: Ecclesiasticus 15:16-21

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118 (119): 1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Gospel: Matthew 5:17-37

I hope you enjoyed your coffee and chips as I suggested to you in last week's column.

The Readings this Sunday focus on the commandments and keeping God's laws. Some people find God's laws and commandments restrictive and prefer to do things their own way. I'm not playing moral judge here, but if we keep the Ten Commandments we are likely to save ourselves a lot of heartache. Saint Paul speaks about God's wisdom as one that covers the past, present and future. The Second Reading ends with this beautiful passage:

"The things that no eye has seen,  
and no ear has heard,  
things beyond the mind of man,  
all that God has prepared for those who love him."

The above passage is one of my favourites from Scripture because it says so much about how God's love is limitless and unconditional. It also serves to remind us that God doesn't force Himself into our lives. We have a choice as to whether we accept his invitation or not. If we do, He can use us to do so much good in the world.

The Readings this weekend got me to thinking about how in my experience as a liturgical musician, I have the privilege of working with a lot of people who understand the liturgy and what is required to prepare it (and its music) and I have also had to bear those people who do not understand liturgy. That they don't or didn't understand the liturgy didn't bother me (I have a long list of things I don't know or understand). What bothers me is the fact that they didn't listen to someone who knew better. My line has always been if it isn't in the Missal, then we don't include it. In fact, the planning of the liturgy has been done for us, with the Roman Missal and the Lectionary. What we need to do is prepare what has been planned. That is, choose appropriate music that fits the liturgy of the day, make sure the readers have rehearsed the readings and can pronounce peoples name and place names, that the sound system is working, there are enough hosts to

distribute for Holy Communion and that all ministers of the liturgy do not disrupt the flow of the liturgy or draw unnecessary attention to themselves.

What is not our job to do is to go and add things into the Mass, change the wording of the prayers or in the case of a school setting give everyone a 'job to do'. My experience has been that those people who 'add things' into the Mass or choose music that is not suitable (e.g. secular music or the banal 'vanilla' music) actually create a lot more work for themselves and stress themselves and everyone else out. So, I think we can take heart from *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* which says:

"The Priest (and others) will remember that they are the servant of the Sacred Liturgy and that they themselves are not permitted, on their own initiative, to add, to remove, or to change anything in the celebration of Mass" (para. 24).

If we follow this directive, we will certainly fulfill the response to this Sunday's Psalm which says: "Happy are they who follow the law of the Lord", and in this way also follow the maxim what we pray is what we believe.

There are so many pieces of music that would well for this Sunday liturgy. Three that come to mind are:

- Eye has not seen (which relates directly to the Second Reading)  
-(AOV 1 #146; GA #466)
- Love is his word (CWB #743; CWBII # 553; GA #462)

There is also a hymn James McAuley and Richard Connolly titled "The law of Christ alone can make us free", which is available from Willow Publishing. That hymn summarises so beautifully the readings of this Sunday and gives us much to think about as we try to be authentic followers of Christ. This same hymn will work well for the Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time as well (next Sunday). It gives a positive image of the commandments illustrating how there is a freedom in following them.

To finish this week's column, three other comments. Firstly, thank you to everyone who gave me encouragement and support with this column last year. I am very grateful to you all. Please accept my humblest apologies for not always being able to respond especially as we got closer to the end of 2019. There were a number of events which the staff at the Centre for Liturgy were involved in the latter part of last year and unfortunately that meant that I didn't always get to respond your positive feedback. Please know that I am grateful to you and I will certainly try to keep on top of such things this year.

Today is Valentine's Day. The commercial operators have been going gangbusters in preparation for today. For those of you who have found the "right-one" may your love for each other mirror the love God has for all of us. For those of us who haven't, may we continue living our lives loving the Lord and our neighbour. Being single is a vocation as well and one that must be lived out fully.

Next Sunday is the last Sunday before the Season of Lent begins, so in next week's column I'll give some music suggestions to wrap-up this first part of Ordinary Time and also for the beginning of Lent.

A coffee and cake suggestion for this weekend. Yes, I was at Pimlott and Strand a couple of weeks ago with a very good friend and the pear and custard crumble was a wonderful way to wash down the meal. So, I'm going to go back there to have that and a coffee as we celebrate the liturgy and God's wonderful laws and ways this weekend.

Till next week, enjoy your coffee and cake!

Mr Alessio Loiacono  
Music Field Officer

Friday 14 February 2020