

*From the Director of Worship, Dr. Paul Ciotti*

*As we celebrate Mass publicly for the first time since the Second Sunday of Lent, I share the following with you:*

My life flows on in endless song . . .

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains . . .

God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person, in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises.

To enter our Eucharistic Liturgy; the Mass, and to find us not singing God's praises, not gathering beforehand to find out the latest news of each others lives from the past week, not giving Christ's Peace in signs of hugs, kisses or handshakes, not bringing forth the elements of the banquet: bread & wine; all makes no sense to our being.

A cry from deep within our being, music is a way for God to lead us to the realm of higher things. As St. Augustine says, "Singing is for the one who loves." Music is therefore a sign of God's love for us and of our love for him. In this sense, it is very personal. But unless music sounds, it is not music, and whenever it sounds, it is accessible to others. By its very nature song has both an individual and a communal dimension. Thus, it is no wonder that singing together in church expresses so well the sacramental presence of God to his people.

Jesus and his apostles sang a hymn before their journey to the Mount of Olives. St. Paul instructed the Ephesians to "[address] one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts." He sang with Silas in captivity. The letter of St. James asks, "Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise."

It is with great sadness that the assembly is asked not to sing because Covid-19. When individuals sing, they project their voices. Powerful voices project droplets and aerosols at far greater distances than does casual conversation. Our cantors will be the sung voice of the assembly for the

time being. I invite everyone to let the songs sing in your heart while our cantors sing the Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, and Communion Songs.

Let your songs continue in your showers, walks, drives and prayer life.

No storm can shake my inmost calm  
While to that refuge clinging;  
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,  
How can I keep from singing?