

..... **Daily Devotions**

Devotions – August 6-12, 2017

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Four Memorable Hymns and Three Commemorations

Sunday, August 6, 2017

Evangelical Lutheran Worship 460 - *Now the Silence* - hymn tune NOW

Text: "Now the silence Now the peace Now the empty hands uplifted Now the kneeling Now the plea Now the Father's arms in welcome . . ."

Jaroslav Vajda wrote the words to this hymn, thinking of it as an opening hymn in a worship service. It is one of a few non-rhymed hymns in the ELW. He wanted it to convey the sense of awe and wonder at what happens when we worship God.

The music is by Carl Shalk, who has composed nine of our ELW hymn tunes. I had the brief pleasure of meeting him at a convention of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) in Milwaukee a few years ago. He was friendly and outgoing as we chatted in the convention bookstore, he inquiring about my career in church music even as I was complementing him on his distinguished career in the song of the church.

At the ALCM convention in July this year in Minneapolis, Daniel Schwandt, who gave an organ concert and workshop at Messiah in Marquette in October of 2015, led a session on cantoring.

Let us pray: *We thank you, Lord, for the gift of music, and for how it can enhance our understanding of our worship experience. Amen*



Monday, August 7, 2017

ELW 792 - *When Memory Fades* - hymn tune FINLANDIA

Text: "When mem'ry fades, and recognition falters, when eyes we love grow dim, and minds confused, speak to our souls of love that never alters, speak to our hearts, by pain and fear alarmed. O God of life and healing peace, empow'r us with patient courage, by your grace infused." (Verse 1)

Mary Louise Bringle, born in 1953, wrote the words to this hymn when the mother of a very good friend was nearing the end of her struggle with Alzheimer's, and the friend's father, the major caregiver, was becoming quite frail. We know that 5,000,000 Americans suffer from Alzheimer's, and many more million family members and friends live with the stress of this disease.

The tune FINLANDIA by Jean Sibelius is also in our ELW as hymn 887, *This Is my Song*. We sang this at our concerts last month when the Marquette Choral Society and the Marquette City Band were on tour in Finland to help celebrate the Finnish Centennial of Independence, 1917-2017. We have many good memories of those eleven days of music and sightseeing and getting acquainted with new Finnish friends.

Let us pray: *Help us to know that you, O Lord, are always there to comfort and guide us, no matter what our physical or emotional condition may be. Amen*



Tuesday, August 8, 2017

We commemorate DOMINIC, founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans).

Text: Titus 1:9

"(A bishop) must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it."

In the early 1200's, the Spanish priest Dominic preached against the Albigensians, a heretical sect that held gnostic and dualistic beliefs. Dominic saw the great wealth of the clergy as an obstacle to restoring heretics to the church. He founded an itinerant Order of Preachers (Dominicans) who studied philosophy and theology, preached against heresy and lived in poverty.

Dominic was opposed to burning Christians at the stake. Instead of harsh judgment, he counseled kindness and gentle argument to restore the lost, heretical and unorthodox Christians back to the fold. Three times he refused the office of bishop so that he could continue his work of preaching, studying and teaching.

Let us pray: *Embolden us to speak and defend our faith with kindness and gentle argument. Amen*



Wednesday, August 9, 2017

ELW 616 - *Jesus, Remember Me* - hymn tune REMEMBER ME

Text: **"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom . . ."**

The words for this song, which is from the Taizé community, come from Luke 23:42, from one of the criminals crucified with Jesus on Good Friday. Although the Taizé brothers were French, this song was first written in English. Jacques Berthier wrote the melody, which can be sung over and over in a mesmerizing kind of chant, so suitable for contemplation and prayer.

This simple, beautiful hymn will always remind me of an evening worship service at St Peter Cathedral in Marquette some years ago. Taizé brothers led the ecumenical service, which was packed. Many candles and soft singing provided a hushed atmosphere as we came forward to kneel and pray and receive a blessing. It was an uplifting and memorable experience for all who attended.

Let us pray: *Be with me, Lord Jesus, and remember me now and in the world to come. Amen*



Thursday, August 10, 2017

Today we commemorate LAWRENCE, deacon and martyr.

Text: Acts 6:1-6

". . . (in Jerusalem) the twelve called together the whole community of disciples and said ... 'select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the spirit and of wisdom whom we may appoint to this task' (of caring for the community) . . ."

As one of the seven deacons, Lawrence was responsible for financial matters and care of the poor in the Christian church in Rome. Valerian, the emperor, was bent on persecuting the Christians, and demanded that Lawrence hand over the treasures of the church.

Now, imagine this: Lawrence gathered together lepers, orphans, the blind and the lame, and presented them to Valerian, saying "These are our treasures." The emperor was outraged, and sentenced Lawrence to death. He was killed in the year 258. His martyrdom was one of the first to be observed by the church.

Let us pray: *Let us be ever mindful of the poor, and of those who care for them when we cannot. Amen*



Friday, August 11, 2017

Today we commemorate CLAIRE, Abbess of San Damiano.

Text: Mark 8:34

"(Jesus said) If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

Clare, at the age of eighteen, was inspired by hearing Francis of Assisi preach in her town. With his help, she and a growing number of friends were determined to follow his example of Christian living. They established a women's Franciscan community which they called the Order of Poor Ladies, or Poor Clares.

Clare became an advisor to Francis, living a life of complete poverty, thereby standing against the wishes of the popes of the 1200's. She died in 1253. She was an inspiration to many women.

Let us pray: *We pray for the courage and discipline to live Christian lives. Amen*



Saturday, August 12, 2017

ELW 534 - *Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name* - hymn tune ELLERS

Text: "Savior, again to thy dear name we raise with one accord our parting hymn of praise; once more we bless thee ere our worship cease, then, lowly bending, wait thy word of peace." (Verse 1)

This "Sending" hymn was written by John Ellerton in 1866 for a Choir Association Festival in Cheshire, England. The tune we use in the ELW was first composed by Edward J. Hopkins, then re-arranged by Arthur S. Sullivan who is known for his music in the many rousing and delightful Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. ELLERS was apparently the nickname of John Ellerton.

This hymn always brings me back to Mount Hope Lutheran Church in West Allis, Wisconsin. Whenever my family traveled to visit my grandparents, Gustav and Hilma Tuomin who lived in West Allis, we would attend Mount Hope. And it seemed to me, a child, that the service always ended with this hymn. It was played by a petite energetic organist who had a mighty touch on that pipe organ. Those were the times when Thee's and Thou's were common in hymnody. It was a fitting way to end worship.

Let us pray: *Thank you again, Lord, for music and its many ways of engaging us to praise you. Amen*

