

Singing the Our Father – Coming Soon!

Singing the Catholic Mass (*rather than just speaking the words*) is as ancient as the existence of the Mass itself. Not only did Jesus finish the last supper by singing psalms on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane (*see Mark 14:26*), but as we've reflected on throughout these bulletin articles over the last year, the Mass was also meant to fulfill a variety of Jewish feasts, such as the Passover, which involved a liturgy, structure, and singing at different times as well. The history of singing at Mass is very important and valuable for quite a variety of reasons, but to keep it brief here, let's just look at what the Church encourages today after around 2,000 years of celebrating this most sacred and living meal.

The Church says that singing at Mass is meant for two main purposes, which are "**the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful**" (*The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy {SC}*, Vat. II, par. 112). In other words, when we are singing at Mass, we are not primarily focused on the quality of our performance for other people or to be congratulated by others, but rather, we are meant to place our hearts before God and give Him the glory that due with both our voices and our hearts during those moments of song. In addition, the main result of these songs is that WE are sanctified by singing the true and beautiful works of Scripture and the Tradition of the Church (*see also SC 121*). **Do you believe that you can be made holy or that you can become a holier person by singing during Mass?!**

The Catholic Church also encourages specific parts of the Mass to be sung more often than other parts because of the priority, importance, or solemnity of a specific part of the Catholic Mass. Within the first degree or first tier of important moments that should be sung at Mass whenever possible, is the Our Father prayer (*Musicam Sacram*, par. 29-31). We have not sung this part of the Mass yet, since I've arrived here almost exactly four years ago to the day, but I'm happy to announce that we will begin singing the Our Father starting in two weeks here at Our Lady of the Visitation. Many of you might already be familiar with the tune, but for those who are not, or for those who want to follow along, the exact tune we will be using can be found in Page 32 of our black St. Augustine hymnals.

Overall, I want to encourage you to sing this part of the Mass to the best of your ability, so that we are all singing together as one family. Of course, if you are not good at singing or not comfortable singing out loud, then you can certainly just sing softer (being united in song and trying to help the people around us to sing is a good thing to consider as well, so that we are not distracting others or doing our own thing with song during Mass – as far as pace, or volume, or anything to unduly separate ourselves from the union of voices in the congregation). However, my encouragement is for everyone to try their best to sing because that can and should be a powerful part of praying at every Mass together. If we all sing, even just a little, and we are doing it for the right reasons, to glorify God and to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, then I guarantee you it will be a powerful experience for everyone involved here on the weekend at Mass. May we thank God for teaching us how to pray through the Our Father prayer, and may we ask Him to help us sing it from our hearts and souls, so that we can receive what He wants to give us from His grace at every Mass. The love from His heart on the Cross and in the power of His Resurrection from the dead! God Bless you.