

Wednesday, July 13th: 11:00-Noon

C-06 Finding Common Ground/Embracing Differences: Singing with the Whole Church

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There is so much that can separate us—age, culture, interests, language, expectations, life situations. How do we find common ground to worship together, and how do we celebrate the diversity that is the whole Church?

[From the Many, Make Us One]

vss. 1, 4, 6 (alt. vs)

The first verse of Tony and Gabe's song reflects the beautiful prayer of Jesus "that his followers might be one."

[slide of Jesus giving the [Farewell Discourse](#) to his 11 remaining disciples, from the [Maestà of Duccio](#), 1308-1311 & John 17]

By the time the Gospel of John was in its final form, some 60 years after Jesus' resurrection, Jesus' followers had already divided into multiple worship traditions and throughout the history of the Church, Christians of different cultures, varying theologies and differing tastes have worshiped in a myriad of ways.

[slide of various worship leaders]

There are real and important differences between faithful Roman Catholics about what constitutes "good" or "right" worship. There are even greater differences between Roman Catholic worship and the worship of other denominations. I do not want to minimize or dismiss them. But in this workshop I want to explore what Roman Catholics in particular and Christians in general share in common. Even more I want to explore how our differences and our disagreements can be recognized as the work of God's Spirit, alive and challenging us to grow in our faith and in our mission for the life of the world.

My hope is that this workshop could help nurture and continue an on-going conversation among those of us who plan and lead worship, a conversation at this convention and a conversation that we take back to our own communities.

To begin I will what I will not address in this workshop: I am not going to enter into a discussion about particular styles of music and the composition of music groups within worship. I hope that this workshop will help stimulate conversations in which various styles of music, individual songs and liturgical music groups can be evaluated in light of how well they serve God and God's people in their faith journey.

If we are going to find common ground in our worship and in our mission as Christians, we must begin with Jesus. [Hagia Sophia Christ].

Within that perspective I want to divide my time with you in four pieces. First [God's Reign envisioned] by exploring the vision of the Reign of God as Jesus proclaimed and lived it. As Fr.

Eugene LaVerdiere says, in the Eucharist we have a foretaste of God's Reign—we are “dining in the Kingdom.”

Even as we yearn for the fullness of God's Reign we live [In a world broken by sin]. we will address how our sin, as individuals and as the broken body of Christ, distorts and obscures God's Reign. Unless we honestly acknowledge our own sin, we will not be able to discern and welcome the movement of God's Spirit in our lives and in the life of our community.

Next [Finding Common Ground] we will look for the common ground in our worship. How do we discover and proclaim God's Spirit presence within our differences and our disagreements?

Finally [lead a life worthy...] we will explore how we respond to our calling as servants of Christ.

Here's what I will be talking about—four sections, three questions and some spiritual practice suggestions, and we'll sing:

Part One God's Reign Envisioned

Theologian Walter Brueggemann suggests that, when Christians gather for worship, together with God we participate in “world-making,” imagining and embodying in our words, prayers and actions Jesus' Reign of God. Based upon Jesus' teaching and his actions, here are some characteristics of God's Reign we can discern;

[Abundant life] [for all] At the heart of John's Gospel, Jesus sums up his mission in these words:

[I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly]
John 10:10

This does not mean earthly wealth or power, it does not mean a life free from sorrow and loss. It means that God wants for all of us a life in which all of life is full, rich and filled with God's Spirit of love.

[Humility & Gratitude]

Humility & gratitude are intimately bound together. A proud heart cannot be grateful. When Jesus says “Blessed are the meek; it does not mean “the timid” rather it refers to those who are not arrogant.

To be “clothed in humility” is not a demeaning or degraded state; rather it is to understand our total and common dependence upon God's grace and mercy. Only when we understand this will our song be truly filled with gratitude.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness,
humility, meekness and patience...
with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms,
hymns and spiritual songs to God.

Colossians 3:12, 16

[Forgiveness]

[Love & Mercy]

Love your enemies, do good and lend,
Expecting nothing in return...
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,
Just as the Lord has forgiven you,
So you also must forgive.

Luke 6:35-36

I have yoked the next two qualities “forgiveness” and “merciful love.” Together they reflect the heart of Pope Francis’ jubilee Year of Mercy, an invitation to discern God’s mercy present not only in this year, but the unfailing mercy of God always present/

[Freedom]

When Jesus is speaking of God’s Reign, many of the words that he uses, especially in the Gospel of John, have a meaning that turns the world as we know upside down. “Freedom” for Jesus does not mean license to consume and exploit others; rather in the Reign Jesus envisions, it is freedom from sin, the freedom to choose love and compassion and the way of service.

[God] has sent me to proclaim
release to the captives,
to let the oppressed go free.

Luke 4:18

You will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.

John 8:32

[Welcome & inclusion]

Over and over throughout the Gospels, Jesus models how the weakest, most vulnerable and most oppressed—children, widows, tax collectors, prostitutes and lepers—are not only welcome; Jesus says, “...of such is the Kingdom of God.”

The Pharisees] said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”
...when he heard this, he said,
“Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

Matthew 9:11

Question:

When have I experienced the Sunday Eucharistic celebration of my own community as a foretaste of God’s Reign as Jesus proclaimed it (humble, grateful, forgiving, rich in mercy, loving, welcoming and inclusive)?

How does the music I choose and my musical leadership support and inspire my community to embrace the challenging call of the Gospel?

[Vamos Todos (from the handout sheet)]

Part II – In a World Broken by Sin

Even as we gather in God's presence and pray for God's Reign, we are painfully aware of how we and the world are broken and burdened and betrayed by our own sinfulness.

We are broken in our relationships & in our faith community,
We have broken in our neighborhoods & our nation,
There is brokenness in our world and in our relationship with the earth itself..

In our brokenness,
abundant life can seem to be overcome by violence and death
humility & gratitude is lost in arrogance and greed
Forgiveness is forgotten in the desire for revenge and resentment
Merciful love becomes hatred & indifference
Freedom from sin becomes bondage to sin and exploitation of others
Fear turns welcome into selfish rejection of the vulnerable and alien

Question:

Can I name the ways and occasions in which my ministry
has distorted or limited the voice of God's Spirit
(through what I choose to sing or not sing,
through how I invite or don't invite others into a sacred, singing relationship?)

How can I, together with my community, face and acknowledge how our own sin has compromised our worship and hindered God's Reign?

[Come Now, O Prince of Peace]

Part III: Finding Common Ground: In The Heart of Our Worship

The Eucharist arose as Jesus' first followers gathered in his name remember his death and resurrection

The Eucharist is source and summit of our life as Christians.
Oftentimes it itself becomes a place of contention and disagreement (modeling a broken Christian community).

The Heart of Christian Worship

God's love revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus

The Skeleton (basic structure, largely in place by late 2nd C. CE)

Word & Meal

Gathering & Sending (very simple)

The Flesh (elements that are important, but not essential)

Sprinkling Rite / Gloria

Chanting the Eucharistic Prayer

Receiving under both species

Singing the Psalm

Gospel Procession

Postures (standing vs. kneeling)

The Clothing (cultural and local and stylistic choices / not central / have power to both illumine and obscure the "heart" / source of many, if not most passionate community tensions)

Worship aids

Hymns vs. "Praise songs"

Physical space

Instrumentation

Time of Mass

Anthems

Furniture

Common Ground With All Christians & people of faith

Vamos todos –come now, O prince of peace—Miren Que Bueno

through other cultures, we receive songs that

- are deeply grounded in a community
- depend on the community's voice
- reflect a hope and conviction that God is at working the world
- defy a style or label
- give us a more encompassing and rich understanding of God's incarnation

[*Miren Que Bueno* (Sosa)]

[*May the Peace of Christ Be With You / Ki Ri Su To No* (True)]

[*Soli Deo Gloria (Haugen)*]

The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption;
the end is the creation of the beloved community.

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., December 3, 1956

Question:

What are the situations,

Who are the people,

What are challenges that I am facing

In which God's Spirit is trying to speak to me?

How does God want to move through me?
Where am I being led to a deeper sense of ministry?
What am I being called to sing?
Who am I being challenged to welcome and embrace?

[I beg you to lead a life]

Eph 4: I...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, in faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,

Vocational practices

Pray (each day)

- for humility
- in gratitude
- for the need of others
- for the life of creation

Be attentive, open & vulnerable

- to the one on the margins
- to those who disagree with you
- to God speaking through hardships and struggles

Practice humility & gratitude

- in loving thoughts
- in gracious words
- in selfless action

[Here Among Us]

[We are Marching in the Light of God]