



Do we ever pay attention to the Entrance Antiphon at Mass? In many ways, it is like the prologue in a novel or the welcome note in a playbill. It says a lot in a very short and simple manner.

In reviewing some of the readings for the Mass, I discovered that the Entrance Antiphons for the Second Sunday and the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time both relate to singing. The Second Sunday Antiphon reads: "All the earth shall bow down before you, O God, and shall sing to you, shall sing to your name, O Most High!" Similarly, the Third Sunday Antiphon is as follows: "O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendor, strength and honor in his holy place."

Both psalm excerpts place a high value on singing to the Lord. Do we place a high value on singing to the Lord? Do we ever reflect on how important our singing is to the liturgy? When we are singing at Mass do we do so in a rote fashion or are we really concentrating on the words? The music selections are made in a way that reinforce the theme of the Sunday's liturgy and reflect the readings of the day.

If we were to take a poll of parishioners and ask them to name their favorite hymns, I wonder what they would say? Personally, I have so many that I can't name just one---it's like eating Lays potato chips; I can't just have one! I have been thinking of hymns from my youth that have stuck in my mind. When I was young and in a French parish, we would often sing "Je Suis Chrétien." Growing up post-Vatican II, the hymn "All You Peoples, Clap Your Hands" was a favorite of many. My own children had their favorites, I know. My daughter loved the song, "And the Father Will Dance." In fact, she used it as the recessional for her wedding!

What makes a song in the liturgy so impactful? I think it's the melody itself and the powerful lyrics. In order for this to be true, we must sing from our hearts and not just with our voices. There is a difference. Listen to any good singer. What makes their performance of a song so strong is not simply the song, but how they sing it.

I am not suggesting that we sing like we are performing. What I am recommending is that we think about the songs we are singing during the liturgy. I am reminded of the words of a Bob Dufford hymn, "Sing to the Mountains": *Sing to the mountains, sing to the sea, raise your voices, lift your hearts. This is the day the Lord has made. Let all the earth rejoice.*

Let us bow down to the Lord most high and let us sing to the Lord!

By Pat Haggerty