

“The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as a combination of sacred music and words, it forms a necessary or integral part of solemn liturgy. The composition and singing of inspired psalms, often accompanied by musical instruments, were already closely linked to the liturgical celebrations of the Old Covenant. The Church continues and develops this tradition:

“Address... one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.” “He who sings prays twice.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1156

St. Augustine wrote in his commentary on Psalm 73:

"For he that singeth praise, not only praiseth, but only praiseth with gladness: he that singeth praise, not only singeth, but also loveth him of whom he singeth. In praise, there is the speaking forth of one confessing; in singing, the affection of one loving."

He who sings, prays twice!

Good morning!

Anyone know what God's first name is?

It's Andy...

Yep, little girl in Sunday School told me it's in the hymn...

G Andy walks with me, **D** Andy talks with me,
D7 Andy tells me I am his own, **G**

I am, Michael Hager from St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church in Simpsonville. I'm going to spend a few minutes talking to you about music as Prayer.

I am a Cradle Protestant boy who married my cradle Catholic High School sweetheart in 1971, one month after I returned from Vietnam with the First Marine Division.

Together we raised three Catholic children, but I successfully resisted converting to Catholicism until 2009 when Michael Cumby, a converted Baptist Pastor on a mission at St. Mary Magdalene explained in detail exactly why the church did not welcome me at communion. Or more accurately, what was required of me to be worthy of the real Lord's Supper. He left me no further excuses and I was confirmed at Easter Vigil in 2010.

I am now

- vice chairman of the Parish Communications committee,
- A core member in the Life Teen program,
- an RCIA instructor,
- a Music Leader for our Life Teen Mass,
- a special ministries speaker for events such as this
- an aspiring Catholic Apologist
- and a soul-on-fire evangelist...

striving every day for my salvation, because God knows I need it...

Gratuitous promotion here; check out my web site at TheBibleCatholic.com for hundreds of Bible scriptures that support the teaching of the Catholic Church. Whenever in casual conversation your non-Catholic friend says “Oh, yeah? Where is THAT in the Bible? Visit my site and BAM, mic drop.

By the way, never drop a microphone, it’s really bad for them and they’re expensive!

Ok, since this is a talk about music, let's start with a song. You all know this one I'm sure so help me out here as we get all warm and fuzzy...

Kum by ya my Lord, kum by ya
Kum by ya my Lord, kum by ya
Kum by ya my Lord, kum by ya
Oh Lord kum By ya

Don't you just want to hold hands, roast marshmallows and make s'mores?

This song has been recorded by dozens of artists including

- Pete Seeger,
- The Weavers,
- Joan Baez,
- the Seekers,
- Peter, Paul and Mary,
- and there's even a rap metal version; Kum By YO!

Kum By Ya has become the international symbol of holding hands and making nice even though we might disagree, and it's been the brunt of every comedy ever produced with a camp fire in it.

Even in politics, referring to the disagreements between Palestine and Israel, President Obama stated, "this can't be reduced to 'let's all hold hands and sing "Kumbaya"'"

And what, do you ask, has this to do with Prayer in Song?

Just this: the origin of this song is a prayer.

It is reputed to have originated with former slaves living on the sea islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. Sung in Gullah, a Creole dialect, the heavily accented words Kum by Ya translate to Come by Here.

So, in regards to music and in reference to my previous comment about “Where is that in the Bible?”

Pretty much everywhere...

A word search of the New American Bible, Revised Editions finds 269 instances of song or singing, nearly all of them in reference to praise or thanks to God,

beginning with the song of Moses in Exodus and ending in Revelation with

all the Angels and Saints singing Holy, Holy, Holy in perpetuity as we do when we join them at mass.

And yeah, just about all of the psalms...

David wrote most of them as hymns or songs to be sung at worship.

By the way, to those more conservative Catholics who don't believe that drums and stringed instruments belong in church, I submit Psalm 150 which reads;

Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy sanctuary;
give praise in the mighty dome of heaven.

Give praise for his mighty deeds,
praise him for his great majesty.

Give praise with blasts upon the horn,
praise him with harp and lyre.

Give praise with tambourines and dance,
praise him with strings and pipes.

Give praise with crashing cymbals,
praise him with sounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath
give praise to the LORD!

Hallelujah!

I submit that the Bible, being the inspired word of God, without error, demands that we have and use such instruments at worship.

All that singing! At least we know that our tradition of music in the liturgy has deep, deep roots. Clearly the early Jewish worship included a lot of singing.

Question... how many scripture readings are there in a typical Sunday Mass?

Right! That's a trick question. Many will say 3 but the second time we hear scripture read in mass is the responsorial psalm which is generally sung by the cantor so we often dismiss it as just a song. But what did St. Augustine say about that? He was specifically speaking about a psalm when he wrote

“he that singeth praise, not only singeth, but also loveth him of whom he singeth.”

In the early synagogues, psalms would be repeated back and forth between two sides of the gathered people, one side reciting a verse, and the other side reciting the next verse, back and forth to the end of the psalm.

This continued even in the early Christian churches and slowly gave way to what we have today with a cantor singing the verses and the congregation responding with a simple phrase in response.

We are expected to participate and sing as a congregation. And let me say this, if you are not singing out in praise, or revenge, you are not participating in the mass as you should be!

As a cantor, I can't tell you how often I look down on the congregation and get (deer in the headlights!)

Sing people! It's part of the Mass!

When the music minister is doing his job right, he is selecting songs for the mass that complement the readings for the day, sometimes these are taken directly from those portions of scripture.

In the back of most of our hymnals are scriptural references for the songs printed there.

So every song sung by the choir, which is leading song for the congregation, is actually scripture that we are all encouraged to sing. Either in praise or revenge.

There is enough history in liturgical music that we could have an entire day on that one subject so rather than dwell on the academic, I want to get a little more into the spiritual.

The idea of Music as prayer.

Does anybody have a **go-to** song that you listen to when you're feeling down, or when you're happy and want some further encouragement?

Has anyone actually written a song to express your feelings?

Who knows who John Newton is?

John Newton was a slave trader in the mid seventeenth hundred's. In 1748 a violent storm battered his vessel off the coast of County Donegal, Ireland, so severely that he called out to God for mercy, a moment that marked his spiritual conversion. He eventually left the slave trades, studied theology and was ordained in the Church of England. To accompany a sermon on New Year's Day, 1773 he wrote Amazing Grace that illustrated his conversion and grace at God's hands.

But did you know that the words printed in almost every hymnal in the US today have the incorrect verses?

Newton wrote about HIS grace, HIS deliverance from harm HIS individual journey and suddenly there is a verse about WE...

When WE'VE been there ten thousand years...

This came about when Elizabeth Barrett Browning was writing the stage play for Uncle Tom's Cabin and there was a scene where Uncle Tom, in despair was trying to sing hymns but couldn't remember all the lyrics so he blended several hymns together including Amazing Grace and a Hymn called Oh, Jerusalem.

But let's *pray* the song as Newton wrote it... and listen to the words...

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, Who called me here below,
Shall be forever mine.

When you listen to the words you can hear his prayer leaping out in song. Praying twice.

Let me leave you with this:

I was told a story at a conference by a youth minister, who described a young teen, attending a Life Night who was shy and nervous and stood off by himself around the edges of the group. This youth minister approached the kid and struck up a dialog with him over the next few weeks and learned the he played guitar and had even written a few songs about Jesus.

By the time he was a senior, he was leading worship in the church at mass and in 2013 he was filmed out on the beach singing one of his songs... no, not singing, but deeply praying one of his songs...

(Matt Maher Video) [click the link](#)

This was adoration with Deacons, priests, Bishops the Pope and THREE MILLION young Catholics on Copa Cabana Beach in Rio.

Remember, that the Mass is a single prayer from the first sign of the cross to the last amen, so when you go to Mass tomorrow, or tonight, when the music starts, sing the words, reflect on the meaning, give it up to God, sing and pray your songs to heaven...

Amen?