

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Dec 29th 2018

This past spring (which seems some time ago during these short December days) I was listening to an interview on NPR (a public radio station in the United States) with an author of a new book about Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein, the great Broadway duo. Aside from the widely appreciated beauty and timelessness of their musical scores is the perhaps lesser known, yet revolutionary, way in which they created them. It was customary at that time for the music to be written, followed by the lyrics to the songs. Rodgers and Hammerstein, however, did this in just the opposite fashion. Recalling this, Rodgers said that "[Having the lyric] gives me an extra push into the solution of the problem of finding the tune."

Is it possible that we may gain some insight into how we should live our lives as Christians from Rodgers and Hammerstein's collaboratory approach? More to the point, is it possible that the Christian vocation may be understood as the writing of the tune that might uniquely match God's Word; the same Word that just became flesh on Christmas?

Today's readings speak of word and song. In the First Reading, we hear, "But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him" (1 JN 2:5). In Psalm 96 we hear, "Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord all you lands. Sing to the Lord; bless his name." Our very faith tells us that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

In our faith, the Word comes first and we are urged to sing! We are urged to put this Word to song with our lives as the melody. God calls each of us to respond uniquely to his invitation to love. Each day presents us the chance to take the Word we have been given and put it to song. Each of the saints wrote their own melody with their lives, each faithful to the same Word; the same lyric. In this Christmas season, let us each be inspired to find the tune the best brings out God's love in us for one another.

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