

Diocese of Galloway - Music Core Group

27 December 2004

To all Parish Musicians

Dear Everyone

The reason for this newsletter so soon after Christmas is that we are planning our first event of next year in Dumfries in January, so we need to give you time to respond. Had we sent it out before Christmas, the papers would probably have got muddled up with the heaps of Christmas cards!

We hope your Christmas celebrations were successful and that you're taking the opportunity for a well deserved rest between Christmas and New Year.

FUTURE EVENTS

St Teresa's Hall, Dumfries on Saturday 29 January

In the morning, Fr Stephen Motroni will facilitate a workshop on music and resources for Lent and Easter. Please will you bring along music, materials and ideas that you have found successful, to share with everyone present.

In the afternoon we will have a talk on ecumenical developments in music, and we will finish with a Taize prayer service (which will be an opportunity to learn some of the chants and other meditative songs originating from the Taize community).

Publicity materials are included with this mailing.

Smithstone House, Kilwinning on Saturday 14 May

The programme isn't at this stage 'firmed up', but make a note of the date now so that you will be able to be there if possible.

Galloway Music Festival Mass on Sunday 14 August

Again, this is a date to be put in your diaries, especially if you live in the south end of the diocese as we are planning to hold out annual open air Mass somewhere in the Dumfries area this year.

OTHER EVENTS THAT MAY BE OF INTEREST

The RSCM (Royal School of Church Music) organise courses and workshops throughout the year across the UK. For more information, visit www.rscm.com.

The Society of St Gregory's Music and Liturgy Summer School for 2005 is being held from 1 - 5 August at Sneaton Castle, Whitby, Yorkshire. The title is 'Go out to the whole world; Proclaim the Good News!', and the theme is mission and evangelisation. There will be a full programme of talks, workshops and liturgical celebrations - as well as opportunities for rest, recollection and socialising. There will be a wide variety of workshops, designed to promote understanding, and to develop skills and experiences to better enable participants to serve their parish community, whatever their particular ministry.

YOUR FAVOURITE HYMNS . . .

Amazing grace

- 1 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.

- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 and grace my fears relieved.
 How precious did that grace appear,
 the hour I first believed.

- 3 Through many dangers, toils and snares
 I have already come.
 'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
 and grace will lead me home.

- 4 The Lord has promised good to me;
 his word my hope secures.
 He will my shield and portion be
 as long as life endures.

- 5 Yes, when this heart and flesh shall fail,
 and mortal life shall cease.
 I shall possess within the veil
 a life of joy and peace.

- 6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
 the sun forbear to shine,
 but God, who called me here below,
 will be for ever mine.

- 7 When we've been there a thousand years
 bright shining as the sun,
 we've no less days to sing God's praise
 than when we first begun.

The story behind this hymn is fairly well known - it was written by John Newton (1725 - 1807) who was captain of an African slave ship. Some say that Newton had a dramatic conversion experience when he escaped from a storm at sea, others think he experienced a more gradual change of heart. Newton applied for ordination by the Church of England, but was at first rejected because he was self-taught (including Latin!) rather than university educated. However, eventually his persistence was awarded.

Like many hymns of its era, there are more verses than usually appear in hymn books. Amazing Grace is a popular hymn for funerals and it seems strange that verse 5 isn't usually included in hymn book texts. The absence of verse 6 isn't perhaps so surprising! The 7th verse is anonymous, or may have been written by John Rees (1828 - 1900).

Amazing Grace is not only popular as a hymn, it is also popular as a song, and has been sung and recorded by countless artists over the years. Perhaps it's one of the few hymns to have been on Top of the Pops!

REVIEWS

www.abmus.org.uk

This is the web site of the Arundel and Brighton Liturgical Music Committee. Its 'welcome' page says it is being developed for Christian musicians, singers, instrumentalists and liturgy planners as they look for resources to support their ministry.

As well as providing information about events (both local and national) and reviews of books and CDs, there is a useful 'resources' section containing articles helpful to parish musicians, for example 'Music for Mass (Where do I start?)', 'The Responsorial Psalm (Advice)', and many other topics.

There is a useful list of links to other web sites (including our own)!

THE CORE GROUP . . . SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING MUSIC . . .

As ever, we welcome any suggestions for what the core group should be doing, and ways in which we can support and promote music.

If you know of other people who would like a copy of this newsletter, please copy it for them - or direct them to the web site to read it (www.gallowaymusic.net). Please also show newsletters to your Parish Priest so that he is aware of our activities.

If you are receiving this newsletter, and you are no longer involved in music in your parish, please will you let Nicola know so that the mailing list can be updated.

With best wishes

The Music Core Group

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