

Singing Our Faith 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time – November 4, 2018

This weekend we will learn a new communion hymn, which also happens to be bilingual—English and Spanish. The hymn can be found at the bottom of this article. I've written several times in this space and in the bulletin about why we sing in Latin. In short, Latin is still considered the universal language of the Church and singing in Latin connects us with our heritage of centuries of liturgical celebrations in this language. Singing in other languages as Mass besides Latin (yes, that includes English!) is an expression of the **local** Church and its vernacular. Every parish approaches (or doesn't) singing outside their vernacular differently. Some do it *just because*, others do it to be more culturally sensitive, and so on. I view it as a way to increase our awareness and connection to the Universal Church.

I was first drawn to the hymn "Amen - El Cuerpo de Cristo" a couple years ago when I was a visitor at another parish. I was drawn primarily to the beauty of the melody, and then to the care that the composer took with setting the text to such a melody. Bilingual hymns can sometimes be "cheap" and more like peace offerings written by a non-native composer. This is not one of those! The text itself is very expressive of what takes place during the Communion Rite. While the lines are reversed, "El Cuerpo de Cristo" means "The Body of Christ," to which we respond, "Amen." Likewise, "La Sangre del Señor" means "The Blood of the Lord." The text and translation of the verses lead us deeper into receiving this sacrament...

1. We remember your dying and your rising.

Y contigo, Señor, resucitamos.

[And with you, Lord, we rise.]

2. Now we offer the sacrifice you gave us.

Te ofrecemos, Señor, todo loque somos.

[We offer you, Lord, all that we are.]

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3. Lord, you make us one body and one spirit.

En tu cuerpo, Señor, un pueblo santo.

[In your body, Lord, a holy people.]

4. We find you when we serve the poor and lowly.

A ti mismo servimos en los pobres.

[You yourself we serve in the poor.]

5. We look forward to your return in glory.

Esperamos el día de tu venida.

[We hope for the day of your coming.]

The composer of this hymn, Fr. John Schiavone has ministered in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for over 40 years. While his surname certainly suggests Italian heritage on his paternal side, this authentic-sounding hymn is a result of his immersion in the hispanic community. (You'd be hard-pressed to find a parish in the Archdiocese of LA that doesn't have Masses in at least two or three languages!) Again, going back to bilingual singing opening our eyes to the communities in other parts of the country and in our own diocese.

I mentioned that some parishes don't even consider bilingual singing as an option. Often, the burden may seem too much. I hope that the singing of this hymn will be enriching to our community – a way to be more mindful of the Hispanic presence in our region, a way to spiritually connect with our sister parish in Guatemala. For the first week or two, I encourage you to let the cantor take the lead on the verses, which contain the bulk of the Spanish text. No pressure! May we always be mindful of the the beauty and universality of our beloved Church!

Stephen Eros

Director of Liturgy & Music

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Amén. El Cuerpo de Cristo

Refrain

A - mén. El Cuer - po de Cris-to. A - mén. La
 San-gre del Se-ñor. *Eat-ing your Bod-y, drink-ing your Blood, we be-*
come what we re-ceive. A - mén. A - mén.

Verses

1. A - mén. We re - mem - ber your dy - ing
 2. A - mén. Now we of - fer the sac - ri -
 3. A - mén. Lord, you make us one bod - y
 4. A - mén. We find you when we serve the
 5. A - mén. We look for - ward to your re -
and your ris - ing. A - mén. Y con - ti - go, Se -
face you gave us. A - mén. Te o - fre - ce - mos, Se -
and one spir - it. A - mén. En tu cuer - po, Se -
poor and low - ly. A - mén. A ti mis - mo ser -
turn in glo - ry. A - mén. Es - pe - ra - mos el

D.C.

ñor, re - su - ci - ta - mos. A - mén.
 ñor, to - do lo que so - mos. A - mén.
 ñor, un pue - blo san - to. A - mén.
 vi - mos en los po - bres. A - mén.
 día de tu ve - ni - da. A - mén.