

Singing Our Faith **13th Sunday in Ordinary Time – July 1, 2018**

Shortly after I began ministry at St. Clare, I introduced the Eucharistic hymn *Draw Near*. It's become a staple in our repertoire, as we've sung it more than any other hymn in our repertoire. (28 times to be exact. Yes, I keep a spreadsheet of how often we sing each hymn in our repertoire!) While the language seems contemporary, the text is one of the oldest Eucharistic hymns, dating back to the 7th century. The hymn's original title is *Sancti venite, Christi corpus sumite* which literally translates to *Come, Holy People, Take the Body of Christ*.

Here's a "Reader's Digest" historical synopsis. The Abbey of Bangor (present day Northern Ireland) was founded by St. Comgall in 558 when the spirit of monasticism was strong in Ireland. Author James Hamilton writes, "*Under Comgall's rigid rule, prayer and fasting were incessant. Food was scant and plain. Worship held the foremost place in the life of the community. It is clear that music was a prominent feature of the worship of the Bangor monks.*" Since worship held such high priority, it's not surprise that the *Antiphony of Bangor* is one of the earliest surviving collections of monastic hymns that the Church can claim. The hymnal ended up at Bobbio Abbey in Piacenza, Italy, which was founded by another Irish saint and friend of St. Comgall, St. Columbanus. About 1000 years later, Italian historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori discovered the hymnal in Bobbio and published it. Fast-forward to 1861 when Anglican priest John Mason Neale translated the hymn *Sancti venite, Christi corpus sumite* into

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Draw Nigh and Take the Body of the Lord. Neale did a considerable amount of this work, having provided the first English translations of beloved hymns such as *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* and *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*. Neale's translation was set to the hymn tune *Coela Domini* (Supper of the Lord) written by Arthur Sullivan. (As in Gilbert & Sullivan – *Pirates of Penzanze*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, etc.) In 1992, contemporary composer Steven Janco wrote a new tune and adapted the first line of the hymn into a refrain that can be easily sung by people walking in a communion procession.

I think the tone of reverence in which this text speaks about the Eucharist has promoted its use for centuries. The version in our hymnal is actually an updated (and slightly more wordy) translation of Janco's adaptation from 1992. There's a phrase in each verse that grabs my attention: 1. We leave the Eucharist with "souls refreshed." – 2. Jesus is the "Victim and Priest" in the sacrifice of the New Covenant. - 3. The Eucharist is the "promise of salvation." (John 6:54-58) - 4. Jesus gives us "living water that fills our thirsting soul." (John 4:13-14). We can take these powerful spiritual phrases/ ideas into our prayer after communion as we give thanks to God and ask him to strengthen our devotion to Christ in the Eucharist.

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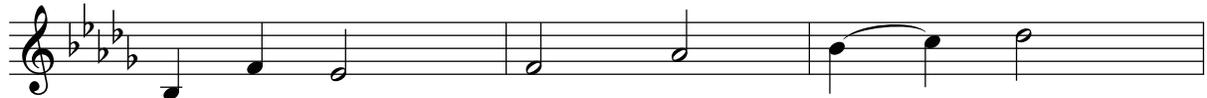
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Refrain



Draw near, draw near! Take the Bod - y



of your Lord. Draw near, draw near!



Drink the Blood for you out - poured.

Verses



1. Draw near and take the Bod - y of the Lord,
2. Christ, our Re - deem - er, God's e - ter - nal Son,
3. Let us ap - proach with faith - ful hearts sin - cere
4. With heav'n - ly bread Christ makes the hun - gry whole;



and drink with faith the Blood for you out - poured.
has by his cross and blood the vic - t'ry won.
and claim the prom - ise of sal - va - tion here.
his liv - ing wa - ter fills the thirst - ing soul.



Saved by Christ's Bod - y and his ho - ly Blood, with
He spent his life for great - est and for least. Praise
Christ rules our hearts, and all his saints de - fends; he
Al - pha - O - me - ga, un - to whom shall bow all



souls re - freshed we give our thanks to God.
Christ, the Pas - chal Vic - tim, Christ the Priest.
gives be - liev - ers life that nev - er ends.
na - tions of the earth, be with us now.

D.C.