

June 7th, 2020

Dear All,

I'm sure your attention these last couple of weeks has been captivated as much as mine has, by the death of George Floyd and everything happening in response. In such times the Church's conviction remains what it has always been: that every person is created in the image of God and is of inestimable worth; that we all exist to flourish according to the gifts of spirit and personality with which we are endowed; that we work together by free cooperation, and any attempt at using or co-opting another person's agency for my own end diminishes their humanity and mine as well, while betraying the Holy Spirit who has brought us together. We know this. But the fact that we frequently cannot see our neighbors in this light is testament to the insidious quality of sin, and particularly the sin of racism.

I commend to you the [statement from our Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev'd Michael Curry](#), as well as [his sermon from this past Sunday](#). Both are important messages, which I hope will challenge and encourage you, as well as inspire you to respond with love in the face of hate.

Finally, a liturgical note: this Sunday we'll begin singing a new setting of the "mass ordinary" than the one we've been singing through Eastertide. (The Mass Ordinary is the name for those unchanging liturgical songs that make up a kind of chain of islands we always visit on our way through the Liturgy, and by their fixity give some shape and direction to the whole: they are, by their proper names, the Kyrie, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Credo, the Sanctus & Benedictus, and the Agnus Dei.) The one we'll sing this Sunday is a plainchant setting from the 16th century, called the "Missa de Angelis." We've sung one or two pieces of it before, and at least one is in the hymnal — but never in its entirety. To get us all familiar with the music, our organist and choirmaster George Emblom will lead a brief rehearsal in place of the prelude this Sunday.

Some of you may be nervous to discover we'll be singing the text in Latin, rather than in one of the usual English translations from the Prayer Book. I promise this is not representative of some nefarious "High Church" or "Anglo-Catholic" agenda! Only we've been singing the same few congregational settings on rotation for a while now, and it's time to add some different settings to our parish repertoire — and this particular setting is one of the most beautiful on earth, and one of the most accessible to boot. The reason we're singing it in Latin is simply because the music was written for the Latin text, and there are no English translations that retain the musicality of the original. (We will print the classical English translation as well as a "Scriptural paraphrase" of each part of the ordinary at the end of the bulletin for reference and devotion.) While as Anglicans we have historically prided ourselves on worshiping in a language the congregation understands, we also know that language can divide as much as it can unite; what keeps us together is the intention to hold one another in all love and humility. I hope the beauty of this setting will help us to do just that, as we offer our selves and our world to God.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Blake