

Singing our Hallelujah

In the Hallelujah Chorus, that concludes Part 2 of Handel's Messiah there is a wonderful melodic and harmonic sequence. The words are taken from the Book of Revelation chapter 11 and declare that the

“The Kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever”.

Take a listen to this sequence (116-140)

It is this vision that motivated St. Francis Xavier, to leave the familiarity of Paris where he taught Philosophy to be sent by St Ignatius of Loyola to Goa India in 1541, a year after the founding of the Society of Jesus. From that year until his death in Japan in 1553 he sang the song that proclaimed the kingdom of Jesus to a people and land very foreign to him.

Wherever he went, Xavier lived with the poorest people, sharing their food and rough accommodations. He spent countless hours ministering to the sick and the poor, particularly to lepers. Very often he had no time to sleep or even to say his breviary but, as we know from his letters, he was filled always with joy.

Xavier went through the islands of Malaysia, then up to Japan. He learned enough Japanese to preach to simple folk, to instruct, and to baptize, and to establish missions for those who were to follow him. From Japan he had dreams of going to China, but this plan was never realized. Before reaching the mainland, he died on this day in 1553. His remains are enshrined in the Church of Good Jesus in Goa.

What inspired someone like St Ignatius to do what he did? A view of the world and eternity that was informed and formed by his biblical vision. A vision beautifully articulated in the first reading from Isaiah 29. As is true with the Hallelujah Chorus that comes at the end of Part 2, where the theme has been the passion and suffering of Jesus, so too in Isaiah 29 today's text. These verse come right after ones that chronicle suffering and hardship. In the verses read today are words celebrating that the deaf and the blind will see, injustice executed by tyrants and unscrupulous judges will be ended. There will be the true worship of God and the dignity of all people will be celebrated for all will desire to know the Lord.

***The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD,
and the neediest people shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.
No longer shall Jacob be ashamed,
no longer shall his face grow pale.
And those who err in spirit will come to understanding,
and those who grumble will accept instruction.***¹

Here is an expression of the Revelation passage where the Kingdom of this World will become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ. It is a vision of heaven!

¹ [The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version](#). (1989). (Is 29:24). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Whenever the followers of Jesus grasp this vision we more fully recognize that we are called by Jesus to embody his presence so that we allow for Jesus to work through us to open the eyes of the blind to see him. We live in a time where so many are incapable of seeing Jesus, those who err in Spirit and grumble to accept instruction. However whenever the Church takes to heart our missionary call, we can like St Francis Xavier be a people whose song throughout life is to sing that the kingdom of this world will ultimately become, one day the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ. When we have this biblical vision we can sing our Hallelujah and with our Collect pray more fervently these words:

O God, who through the preaching of Saint Francis Xavier won many peoples to yourself, grant that the hearts of the faithful may burn with the same zeal for the faith and the Holy Church may everywhere rejoice in an abundance of offspring.