



Saint Cecilia, Pray for Us: Guided Prayer and Reflection Inspired By and Honoring the Patron Saint of Music

The National Association of Pastoral Musicians (NPM) offers this resource to help you celebrate the feast of Saint Cecilia. As pastoral musicians, we draw inspiration from the patron saint of music. On her feast day (November 22), we invite you to pause and reflect on the gifts we have been given and that we share with others.

This resource is intended for individual or group use. If you're using it with a group, we invite you to use the Scripture passages and subsequent reflections for dialogue and insight.

The opening and closing reflections are also appropriate for individual use.

If you would like to use this resource as a time of prayer with a group that sings, we invite you to add an opening and closing song that fit your community, both stylistically and musically. Need some suggestions? The NPM staff offers some of their

favorite selections at bit.ly/NPMstaffpicks.

For more information about the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and how to join as a member, visit www.npm.org.



Opening Prayer

Close your eyes and breathe ten full breaths, gently in and out. Feel the spirit that fills your lungs and your heart as you begin. Slowly re-open your eyes and pray:

God who calls us into being,
you also call us into service.

Help us as we minister to your Church.
Make the notes we sing and play an instrument
to preach your holy Gospel to the people we serve.

Center our music and indeed our very lives
in the message of love in your name
and in the name of your Son and the Holy Spirit.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening Reflection

Lord, as I begin, I am thankful for:

The gift of music has blessed my life in these ways...

Lord, teach me to...

Prayer Requests:

Opening Scripture (Psalm of the Day: November 22, 2024)

R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!
In the way of your decrees I rejoice,
as much as in all riches.

R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!
Yes, your decrees are my delight;
they are my counselors.

R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!
The law of your mouth is to me more precious
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!
How sweet to my palate are your promises,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!

R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!
Your decrees are my inheritance forever;
the joy of my heart they are.

R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!
I gasp with open mouth
in my yearning for your commands.
R. How sweet to my taste is your promise!

-Ps. 119: 14, 24, 72, 103, 111, 131

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Reflection Questions

How has the Word of God been a source of strength and sweetness in my life this past year? What particular Scripture comes to mind?

How has the ministry I have been blessed to do, been a source of sweetness for me? Namely, is it in the music I do, or the people with which I minister, or something else?

How has God's mercy and love been revealed in my ministry? How has God's joy been shown?

Sacred Scripture (First Reading Option for the Memorial of St. Cecilia)

Hosea 2:16bc, 17cd, 21-22

Thus says the LORD:

I will lead her into the desert
and speak to her heart.

She shall respond there as in the days of her youth,
when she came up from the land of Egypt.

I will espouse you to me forever:

I will espouse you in right and in justice,
in love and in mercy;

I will espouse you in fidelity,
and you shall know the LORD.

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“Sing Cecilia Sing!”: A Reflection

Sing Cecilia Sing! What a joy it is for us to have this day to celebrate music ministry. Do we sing with Cecilia? Do we sing as Cecilia sang? Is there a song in your heart? Does it bring you joy? Today, I am happy. Little did I know so many years ago that this woman whom we celebrate today would find her way into my heart and fill it with song and a unique love of the Lord.

In today’s reading, the Prophet Hosea says that the Lord will “speak to her heart.” O Sing, Cecilia! Then the Lord says “I will espouse you to me forever.” Yes, that is why Cecilia has a song in heart during her wedding ceremony. That legacy passed down to us should be evident every time we get the privilege of providing music for the daily Mass or Sunday Eucharist or Baptisms, First Communions, First Reconciliations, Confirmations, weddings, funerals, Ordinations, Anointings—you name it. Ours is the joy of sharing Saint Cecilia’s music to all we encounter. It’s journey. It’s a blessing. It’s vocation.

Today is our day, the Memorial of our patron, Saint Cecilia. Hosea continues, “I will espouse you in right and in justice, in love and in mercy.” Wow! What a call to triumph: righteousness, justice, love, mercy. Not only are we grateful to have those elements bestowed upon us, we are called to go out and do the same through the music we provide. Something about the passage from Luke 12:48 comes to mind here: “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.” *(Continued on next page)*

Reflection on Saint Cecilia (Continued)

Are we not rich? Not everyone can do what we do. Gratitude and humility figure high in my perception of Cecilia. I am grateful for her and what she embodied. Her gift that has been passed down for generations and centuries can go unnoticed. Still, it blesses every liturgical celebration that we encounter.

The final line of Hosea's text is perhaps the most important one: "I will espouse you in fidelity, and you shall know the LORD." No matter what genre of music we celebrate with, the door of inclusivity is wide open so that the people of God may come in to celebrate and know the Lord more dearly. Thank you, Cecilia. May your heart sing into eternity until the heavenly chorus of pastoral musicians may sing joyously with you and know the Lord as you do. Amen.

-Meyer Chambers



Reflection in Song

Has there been a song that has guided you through this year? Write the lyrics down in this area, highlighting or circling any phrases that speak strongly to your heart:

What words/phrases do you hear among the stillness and silence you've created as you reflect on Scripture and song?

Closing Prayer

Loving and generous God,
we come before you as humble ministers of your Word.

Through the intercession of Saint Cecilia,
whose memorial we celebrate today,
may we always serve with justice and in love and mercy.

Help us to serve the Church
by praying, believing and living what we have seen, heard and sung.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

As I end this time of prayer and reflection, I take this phrase/word with me on my heart:

As I go forward on my day, I offer this to the Lord:



Acknowledgements

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Scriptural Reflection Written by Meyer Chambers

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