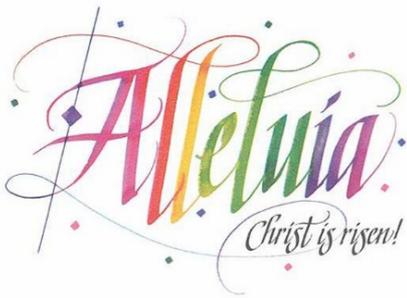


Still We Sing Alleluia: Eastering Through the Pandemic



Alleluia is Easter's Song. Alleluia is the Christian's most important song.

During this time of fear, insecurity, isolation, uncertainty, can we still sing Alleluia at Easter? How can we do so when the past year has been marked by loss in many different forms?

Last year, a former student of mine (He was 8 when he sat in my class. He is now in his early 40's!), Paulo composed a song that was born from the questions he kept in his heart through the ongoing pandemic. What began as a question became a powerful faith conviction. In times of fear and loss, Paulo stubbornly enjoins us to still sing Alleluia.

LET US LISTEN TO THE SONG. <http://bit.ly/StillWeSingAlleluia>

Although *alleluia* is written as one word, its Hebrew original comes from two words, which (both the words and the concepts) have been merged into one. The first half of the word, from the verb *hillel*, means to praise, and it is used hundreds of times in the Bible. Praise what? Praise "Jah." "Jah" is a shortened form of the 4-letter Hebrew name for the Lord, *YHWH*, which is usually pronounced *Yahweh*. *Alleluia* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Hallelujah*. Plainly, a simple translation of *alleluia* is "Praise the Lord."

The Lord must be glorified, for that is our calling as humans and sinners—and as believers. As people growing in faith, we are called to glorify God in all things and in all seasons; in the high and low, in the light and dark. God is always with us, accompanying us even when this presence may not be palpable. So we make an act of faith through our Alleluias because God is always here! And we do so also because we know that even when we may not be there yet, our Alleluias can be a prelude to something wonderful (the way we sing it before the Gospel). We proclaim our Alleluias joyfully but they are also at once, sober, dignified, devout, reverential.

This is the challenge for us at this time, as humans and as believers in Jesus Christ: to still sing Alleluia even when we don't feel like it, even when we are not sure of our "place," even when we are weary. In a real way, Alleluia is our protest against hopelessness and despair. Alleluia marks our faith's rebellion: suffering and death is not the last word. Life is! Love is! Light is! Because our God lives in us and among us always and everywhere!



FOR REFLECTION *(Use any of the Gospel readings for Easter and the Octave)*

- 1) **Affirming Alleluia:** Look within you and around you. In your life and in the world today, what do you sing Alleluia to?
- 2) **Sharing Alleluia:** Who are those in your circle of relationships and beyond whose Alleluias are yet hidden and therefore cannot sing them? How can you share your Alleluias with them at this time?
- 3) **Transforming Alleluia:** Alleluia is a verb. In what way can your Alleluia translate into action and transformation in your life and others'?

Let Alleluia be our hearts' deepest, truest, most joyful song not just at Easter but beyond!