

Fr. Brad Neely
Christmas 2009, Year C

In the movie, “Amadeus,”
Viennese court composer Antonio Solieri (1750-1825)
is portrayed as a rival of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.
Solieri, talks in his older years
about his jealousy concerning Mozart’s musical talent,
while the same time admiring his genius.
He describes to a Catholic priest,
the 3rd movement of Mozart’s “Serenade for Winds.”
He explains that in the beginning of the song,
there are pulses made by bassoons and Bass Horns,
and then, suddenly, from high above,
an oboe, introduces “a single a note,
[which] hang[s] there unwavering,
until a clarinet [takes] it over,
and sweeten[s] it into a phrase of such delight.”
Listening to the actual piece,
it is amazing how seamlessly the oboe
gives the note to the clarinet.
It *is* true musical genius.

We often think about Christmas
in terms of light,
because *Christ is the light*
that comes into a dark world.
It occurred to me recently,
[in light of the Mozart composition just referenced],
--that another way to enter into a contemplation
of Christ’s divine transformation of the world
is through music.

In terms of orchestra, we have:

Strings: Violins—Violas—Cellos—and Basses.

Woodwinds: Piccolos—Flutes—Clarinet—Oboes---
and Bassoons.

Brass: Trumpets—Horns—Trombones—and Tubas.

Percussion: [to provide rhythm and character to the
musical piece]:

Timpani—Marimbas--Tam Tams—

Snare Drums--Bass Drums, and Cymbals.

Thinking of Mozart’s seamless transfer of note
from oboe to clarinet,

we could consider all of the Old Testament prophets
as the oboe---including John the Baptist.

These prophets introduce the note of announcement
for the long awaited Messiah.

This “note of the Messiah” is a beautiful one---
it gives hope,

which some people accept,
and others are not ready to hear.

At the perfect point in time---
and according to God’s plan---
this note played by the prophets

is taken over by God made flesh---Jesus---
who “sweeten[s] it into a phrase of such delight.”
It is a seamless transition.

The beautiful note now becomes sublime.

It now becomes divine.

It is irresistible.

The sublime and divine note who is Jesus
carries the weight of the world,
yet always in sovereignty and majesty.

The note who is Jesus

begins a sequence of notes

that do form a beautiful phrase---

a melody that will play forever.

It is the melody of salvation history,

This melody continues

through the course of human history,

until such time as it will come into its fullest measure
at the end of time.

In the meantime,

something very interesting takes place.

Jesus---invites us to *take part*.

As Jesus the divine melody

continues to play the song of salvation in the world,

He invites us to join Him---

one at a time---

just like music builds within an orchestra---

one instrument--one new note--coming in at a time.

As we gather here for worship,

as we know--we join in the heavenly liturgy,

where in the Book of Revelation,

it describes a divine throne

surrounded by the 24 elders

and heavenly hosts

who never stop singing,

“*Holy, Holy, Holy*

is the Lord God, the Almighty;

he was, he is, and he is to come.” (Rv 4:8b)

In the scheme of human history,

we pay particular attention [this evening, tonight, today]

to the divine plan to restore

our relationship with God

that has unfolded over the ages.

And most especially [this evening, tonight, today],

we show our joy and gratitude

that God became flesh

so that in Jesus,

the gates of heaven are re-opened.