

## SING!

Imagine this: You're at a birthday party and someone suggests that instead of singing "Happy Birthday" you all say it. Does it work? I don't think so. Even though I have some strong feelings about that particular song, I still think it needs to be sung.

Certain moments in life need song. Reciting "Happy Birthday" instead of singing it somehow weakens the good wishes and lessens the love that the simple song communicates. Singing that simple melody - singing it together- that's what is important. Singing doesn't just dress up words, it gives them meaning.

As we come now to Holy Week and the Great Three Days I remind you that human beings turn to song at the high points and low points of their lives. Song makes both joy and sorrow bearable. All human cultures (except maybe our own) have thus had traditional songs to sing on the happiest occasions and the saddest. Today, we turn to song at the happiest and saddest moments of our lives, too. But we rarely sing. Instead we turn on the CD player and listen. We have songs for parties, songs to listen to while we clean the house, songs we listen to when we are sad and songs we listen to when wondering what life is all about.

Listening to music is good. The problem is that we are so accustomed to listening that we don't sing. So when we come to church, we come to listen and not to sing. And I'm afraid that some of our musical practices encourages that by having groups sing at the assembly rather than with it. We're supposed to sing at worship. Our Sunday Service is one of those moments in life that requires song to express its deepest meaning. It limps as badly as a recited "Happy Birthday" when it's not sung.

And when we do this singing, something wonderful happens. Many

voices blend and become one. A communion of singers occurs.

Augustine once said that one of the things that convinced him to convert to Christ was the strong singing he heard coming from the assembly. That singing lured him in and changed his life forever. Can the same be said of our singing?

In these closing days of Lent, these Great Three Days celebrating Christ's Pasch, and the amazing weeks of Eastertide ahead, let's resolve to sing: lament and praise, sadness and joy. God will be glorified.