



Reflection for Wednesday April 7, 2021 Wednesday in Easter Week

“Alleluia”: Since we will be saying this word often in the coming weeks, I think this reflection by Balthasar Fischer is helpful:

It is an unusual word that is not native to the English or even the Latin liturgical vocabulary: the word

“Alleluia.” As a matter of fact, it sounds less like a meaningful word than the babbling of a child, and when it is sung with many notes for the final vowel, this impression becomes even stronger.

“Alleluia” does, of course, have meaning. It is a Hebrew word, and down the centuries the church has brought it with her, untranslated (like “Amen”), as a product of the Jewish soil from which she herself sprang and as a reminder of her earliest days. The word is a cry of jubilation meaning “Praise the Lord,” and occurs frequently in the psalms. . .

But the translation does not explain why the church chose and retained this word from the Hebrew language of prayer in order to express her Easter jubilation, even though in later centuries her own children did not understand the meaning. I think the church meant to say, “In the presence of the mystery that we celebrate on Easter, the mystery of our redemption, our usual intelligible vocabulary is inadequate when faced with the superabundant mercy of God we can only stammer in amazement like children.”

That is how it is with us Christians: As we gaze at the Sun that has risen high over the darkness and cold of our Good Friday, all well-chosen words are useless. We can only stammer out our Alleluia of wonder and jubilation.

Signs, Words, and Gestures, in Easter (Liturgical Training Publications, pp. 17-18)