

Pastor's Point

June 15, 2024 – The Bell Blessing

Gerard Manley Hopkins has a poem simply titled by its first line: AS KINGFISHERS CATCH FIRE, DRAGONFLIES DRAW FLAME.

But a line from that poem came to me when I was reflecting on what to say on the occasion of our blessing of these bells today. Hopkins wrote: “each hung bell’s /Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name....”

Our three bells all have names.

- The largest, named Mary, Mother of Jesus and the Mother of the Church;
- The middle bell is named Andrew, for our patron and Primus Vocatus, the first apostle called;
- And last but not least, named Francis, patron of the Atonement Friars who founded this parish over 40 years ago.

As these bells are rung for decades, even centuries to come, my hope is that all of them will help us in our work to “proclaim the greatness of the Lord,” (Lk 1:46), to tell the world “We have found the Messiah,” (Jn 1:41), and “Praise and Bless the Lord and give Him thanks.” (last line of the Canticle of Creatures)

These bells will call us to prayer, announce our joy as they peal for joyous events and major feasts, and toll as we mourn, sending beloved members of this community back to the God who created them.

My prayer this day is that they will be a blessing – and proclaim a blessing to all who hear them.

Book of Blessings, 1320

Lord,
from the beginning of time
your voice has called out to us,
inviting us to communion with you,
teaching us the mysteries of your life,
guiding us on the way to salvation.

With silver trumpets Moses summoned Israel
to gather as your people.
Now you are pleased that in the Church
the sound of bells should summon your people to prayer.
By this blessing
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accept these bells into your service.

May their voice
direct our hearts toward you
and prompt us to come gladly to this church,
there to experience the presence of Christ,
listen to your word,
offer you our prayers,
and both in joy and in sorrow
be friends to one another.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

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