

Why they call it a hymn FESTIVAL!

If you've ever been to a NPM National Convention, you know that one of the most thrilling experiences comes from being part of hundreds of people exuberantly engaged in song. We are going to recreate that experience at our cathedral on Thursday, May 14th

The hymn festival at the Cathedral of Saint Andrew, (postponed from its original January 21st, date) will now take place on Thursday, May 15th. The entire event will be built around hymns by contemporary writers, writing for the 21st century church; hymns that sing the message of Francis: both the 12th century Francis of Assisi, and the current Bishop of Rome.

Mind you, this is not about new music. A festival comprised of new music, would leave out people who do not read music. We, on the other hand, will be singing fresh, provocative, profoundly theological words to familiar tunes from throughout the ages—tunes everyone knows! Be prepared to be inspired.

Pope Francis makes the headlines on an almost daily basis. His message is clear: The Church must step outside its doors, outside its rubrics and disciplines, and put people first. All people! Of course, that message is not new; two millennia ago it was preached by the Man of Galilee. Modern hymn writers are totally in step with this message, and in sure sign that the Holy Spirit is involved in the process—they are turning out powerful texts that inspire, challenge, and give us voice to praise.

Here are a few reasons why you absolutely must attend!

- *Nicholas Palmer*. Nick, our cathedral music director, is one of the most exciting hymn players in the country (and he's right here!). Chances are you've never heard the organ played in a way that inspires robust congregational singing like you will experience on May 14th. And, our cathedral has one of the finest pipe organs in the State of Michigan.

- *Delores Dufner, OSB, Mary Louise Bringle, Adam Tice*, and others. These are modern hymn writers who are writing words for the Church of today. Words that are profound, provocative, prayerful, and deeply rooted in sacred scripture.

- *Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Ludwig van Beethoven*, and other great tune writers from throughout the centuries. We will sing modern words to magnificent, bold, well-known tunes. Tunes that have been sung by millions and millions of Christians over hundreds of years and which will continue to be sung for centuries to come. And, yes, we will slip in a modern tune or two, making sure that we do it in a way that even the non-readers can get onboard—but the goal is to enable everyone to sing vigorously, and to do that, there's nothing like a familiar melody.

- *You!* Yes, you along with the other music makers in your parish (choir members, cantors, instrumentalists), *and* those folks in your assembly who love to sing. You know who they are. Make sure they know that this is a don't miss event for them. *Charter a school bus!* You need not be an NPM member to attend this event.

- *Us!* Yes, all of us. We are the Church of Grand Rapids. We are the singers of the Church of Grand Rapids. "Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises." (St. Augustine as quoted in *Sing to the Lord*). Let's gather the Church.