

Service Music
January 22, 2012

Prelude - *Carillon-Fantasia on 'St. Anne'* (see page 52 in the Hymnal for Text) - This music is an arrangement based on the hymn *O God Our Help in Ages Past* written by Craig A. Penfield. Penfield used a fragment of the hymn melody in the pedals of the organ along with a florid accompaniment on the keyboard.

Chiming of the Hour - *Westminster Chimes*

Offertory - *The Power of God in Jesus Christ* - "And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them." Luke 5:17 (KJV) "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, 'It is finished:' and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30 (KJV) On August 27, 1498, the twenty-four year old Italian artist and sculptor Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) was asked by Jean Bilheres de Lagraulas, the French bishop and cardinal of Saint-Denis, to make a marble sculpture of Mary holding the dead Christ after His crucifixion. Michelangelo accepted the commission and, after completing the work, the public reaction to the sculpture was stunned amazement. This piece of sculpture, known as the *Pieta* (see page two for a photograph of the sculpture), sealed the fame of Michelangelo as one of the most brilliant artists of his time – indeed, of all time. I have always loved the *Pieta*. The depth of feeling and the beauty expressed in the piece are elements that are truly stunning. Every time I look at the work, I see something new that I have not seen before. This past week, I saw, for the first time, several wonderful details that I had not seen before. Though it is difficult to see in the photograph on page two, when the piece is viewed from a different angle, one can see a faint, but real, smile on the face of Jesus as He is held by Mary. When I saw that detail, it brought great joy to my heart. I thought to myself – 'I think that smile, in death, is symbolic of Jesus' power and victory over sin and Satan. It anticipates the resurrection of Jesus!' That same power was present in Jesus during His ministry on the earth and Luke records for us in Scripture the reality of that power as Jesus went about healing and forgiving sin. Now, look at the face of Mary. I believe another detail is here. Though Mary is dealing with the feelings that accompany the loss of her Son, her face seems to reflect a deep contemplation concerning the meaning of her Son's death. It is as if she is beginning to understand why Jesus died. One might even say that, with the upturned palm of her left hand, Mary is saying to herself and the world – 'Here is the perfect sacrifice for my sins and, also, for your sins. Here is my offering and your offering to God.' In order to express, musically, the power and victory of Jesus over sin and Satan as reflected in the smile of Jesus and Mary's sense of deep contemplation and security, even in sorrow, I will be playing a piece of music which I wrote many years ago which expresses two basic elements: A. Calm contemplation, even in sadness — the beginning of the piece is in a minor key. B. Victory — as the piece continues, it transitions to a major key. The piece ends, not in a tour-de-force of powerful sound, but in, what might be called, a sound of victory which leads to eternal peace. For me, the music expresses the two beautiful elements of calm contemplation and victory seen in the sculpture.

