

Service Music
February 19, 2012

Prelude - Improvisation on *Arise, My Soul, Arise* - (see page 199 in the Hymnal) - This hymn was written by the co-founder of Methodism, Charles Wesley.

Chiming of the Hour - *Westminster Chimes*

Offertory - *The Children of God* - "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" Matthew 19:13-14 (KJV) "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" Matthew 18:1-4 (KJV) "...he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." Luke 9:48b (KJV) Christianity is truly revolutionary, for it turns the thinking of the world on its head. Imagine how seemingly illogical the following statements appear to the unconverted mind:

He who dies will live.
He who is least is greatest.
He who is poor is rich.
He who is weak is strong.
He who becomes more childlike grows into maturity.

All of these statements must be understood in a spiritual context, for they can be summed up in the life of the cross — a death to self. Many Christians have found the beauty of these statements fulfilled in their own lives, a fulfillment which leads to eternal peace and a dependence on the grace of Jesus, their Redeemer. St. Therese of Lisieux spoke of the beauty of such a life:

It is Your arms, Jesus, which are the lift to carry me to heaven.
And so there is no need for me to grow up. In fact, just the opposite:
I must stay little and become less and less. ... Today my only guide is
self-abandonment. I have no other compass. I no longer know how
to ask passionately for anything except that the will of God shall be
perfectly accomplished in my soul.
(from the autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux: *The Story of a Soul*
translated by John Beevers, pages 113, 107.)

Jesus used the example of children to illustrate the humility and dependence that must exist in the heart of a Christian. In the Improvisation I will play arrangements of two hymns, the texts of which reflect childlike humility and dependence:

I. *Children of the Heavenly Father* - (page 44 in the Hymnal - Note verse 1)

II. *Simple Gifts* - Part of the text of this hymn includes the following:

When true simplicity is gained,

To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd, ...

(The text was written by Joseph Brackett, Jr.)

The painting below called *Suffer the Little Children* was created by Carl Heinrich Bloch.

