

Music Blurbs for 3-17-19, Faith of our Fathers

News & Notes

This week we'll sing "Lord of the dance," "Faith of our fathers," "Hail, thou once despised Jesus," and "The God of Abraham praise." The choir will sing "My Eyes for Beauty Pine" by English composer Herbert Howells.

Sunday Bulletins

Today's hymn, "Faith of our fathers," has been widely used in many hymnals of mainline American Protestant denominations. The text, however, reflected the hopes of its Roman Catholic author Frederick Faber. He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1839 and entered the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. The words for the hymn first appeared in *Jesus and Mary or Catholic Hymns* (1849). In every subsequent edition printed under his supervision, "Fathers" is capitalized because it refers to the priests who, under Queen Elizabeth I and for some time after, were under very real danger of "dungeon, fire, and sword." In the preface to his 1861 hymnal edition he stated that both Catholics and Protestants were free to use his hymns. He also stated that his preference was that offending verses would be dropped, rather than reworded as he didn't seem to trust others' poetic abilities. And so the third stanza reads: "Faith of our Fathers! Mary's prayers / Shall win our country back to thee, / And through the truth that comes from God / England shall then be truly free." Not surprisingly, the hymn does not appear in any major Anglican hymnals. It actually does not even appear in the American Catholic hymnal *Worship*. The music first appeared from an anonymous source in a Roman Catholic hymnal in Britain called *The Crown of Jesus* (1864). The tune was associated with a text devoted to St. Catherine: "Sweet St. Catherine, Maid most pure." The tune name ST. CATHERINE has stuck ever since.