

## **Hymns for 18 February 2024**

### **O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High** (*Deus Tuorum Miletum*)

This very early 28 stanza 15th century hymn has been attributed to Dutch mystic Thomas a Kempis. Benjamin Webb was a priest in the Church of England and exponent of the Oxford Movement in its rediscovery of the musical sources of the ancient and medieval church. He translated a shortened version of Kempis' in 1852. The first stanza echoes the prayer of the apostle Paul "thou you and the Lord's holy people...grasp how long, how wide, how high and deep is the love of Christ". The text continues in its wide scope taking in all of Jesus' incarnate life in succeeding verses, His birth; interaction with human affairs; daily ministry ; death, resurrection, ascension and gift of The Spirit. The final verse is a Doxology .A commentator has noted that Webb's text summarizes Christ's life in a similar manner as the Apostles Creed and that a striking feature is the emphasis that Jesus accomplished all of this "for us" which occurs at least a dozen times in his text. Deus Tuorum is regarded as one of the finest Catholic Church tunes of the mid- 18th century and represents a significant French departure in Roman hymnody from its traditional chant style. This pleasant tune has been paired with a number of texts in Protestant hymnals.

### **Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized** (*Caithness*)

Francis Bland Tucker, rector of the capitol's Historic St John's church in Georgetown, wrote this hymn in 1979, and until his retirement was regarded as the dean of modern American hymn writers. Caithness is a confident and dignified melody from the 1635 Scottish Psalter, appropriate to Tucker's plain but poetic text of Christ's baptism, ministry and hope that as believers we will willingly do God's will.

## **Christ, Throughout These Forty Days** (*St Flavian*)

This Lenten text was written by Claudia Francs Hernaman a prolific writer of some 150 children's hymns as well as translations from the Latin. It appeared first in 1873 in her collection *A Children's Book of Praise*. Hernaman born in Surrey, married an Anglican minister and like many other women writers of the 19th century she was devoted to the education of children. She described her efforts as an attempt "to set forth the true type of catholic doctrine and devotion compatible with the mysteries and the dignity of the subject." She uses Christ's life as the model for how His followers should confront temptation. The first two lines of the stanzas focus on a response of Christ when He faced such temptation, the last two lines encourage Christian behavior to follow Christ's example. This is a familiar pattern for children's hymns from the days of Issac Watts. According to a noted British hymnologist the classic themes of the Lenten season are found in Hernaman's hymn text; Fasting with prayer;, Struggle with Satan and sin; Dying to self, meditation on Scripture; Penitence and Looking toward the joy of Easter. St Flavian is a tune from a 1562 English Psalter often used to accompany Psalter texts.