



Sing a new song to the Lord

Homily for 10th June

For those of you who don't know me, I am Sue Price, Director of Pastoral Outreach at MBIT. For those of you who do know me, you will not be surprised if I shed a tear or two at some point today. Today is one of those happy/sad days, which was why, when Liam, out of the blue, emailed me a couple of weeks ago and asked if I would do this I needed to take several deep breathes. I realised that I had to say yes. I said yes because doing this is part of the song that MBIT has been singing over the past 30 years and the song that we will continue to sing. It is a song from and of and by the women of the Church. Sometimes that song is very quiet, sometimes loud, sometimes raucous even, but it is our song.

Over the past 30 years MBIT has had the courage to enter the song. The first song gave birth to the Institute. That song was sung with the support of so many people, some of whom are with us today. We remember those founding trustees with thanksgiving. With Sr Bridget Tighe, they formed and shaped the institute.

We sang that first song with our companions at Wesley House and we are so looking forward to being with them very soon.

The song developed when the Institute moved here to Grange Road. It was a growth point, a new challenge. We inherited from the Canonesses of St Augustine, and it is wonderful that Sr Jenny is with us today, a place of prayer, of study and of outreach. Building on that inheritance, we grew as a community in this place. It has been a community of faith and innovation, an inclusive community that has brought about transformative experiences for so many. I would not be able to stand here today and speak these words if I had not experienced that transformative power myself, and know that is true for so many of you here today. So we give thanks for that.

However, as for many others, in various ways the song we have needed to sing for the past few years has become a song that has been very difficult and painful to sing. It became clear through faith, that we needed to learn to sing in a completely different way. Not only because of the impact of COVID, but also because of the changes within Higher Education, we could not continue to hold the previous tune in harmony, it was not sustainable.



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We are having to change our musical register and learn another new song, not for the first time, and not for the last time either. We are going back to Wesley House where we first learnt to sing, but this time with more mature voices. And we are delighted that Queens' will be moving in here in this place and allowing this building and this garden to find a new song too.

We have been given the instruments we need to find this new song, they are clearly set out for us in our readings today. We go forward, knowing and believing, that as St Paul tells us, we are God's chosen – every single one of us here today. With the gifts of the Spirit that we have been given of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, together we can ensure that a new song for MBIT can be created. It will be created out of love, for our mission and passion for theological education especially for women, through study, research and pastoral outreach. As St Paul says – with that in mind, we must be always thankful.

Christ's message to us, of love and of friendship will dwell with us in our new home. For I firmly believe we have been commissioned by God, to carry on the work of the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology. We have been commissioned to go out and bear much fruit, fruit that will last.

And so we will sing a new song to the Lord, for he has and continues to work wonders. And I ask you all here present to pray with us, to give thanks with us, and to have the courage to join with us, in our new song.

Sue Price

Director of Pastoral Outreach