

Centennial Prayer for The San Francisco Chapter of The American Guild of Organists 1911 – 2011

O God, in whom angels and saints delight, and with whom we join in singing to you an endless hymn of praise, we gather to celebrate and thank you for your many blessings to the San Francisco Chapter of the American Guild of Organists as we mark the centennial of our Chapter.

We thank you for our founders and members, past and present: for their vision, for their love of the organ and its music and for their legacy that has been passed down from year to year, from one generation to the next, until this gathering this day.

We thank you as well for the organ builders who have created instruments in our cathedrals, churches, synagogues, colleges, universities, and homes that have enriched the lives of countless people and have distinguished our San Francisco Bay Area and region. We thank you for the organists of our Guild and for visiting artists who have made these instruments sound in such glorious ways, bringing forth music to touch our hearts and inspire us to that more profound *Amen*.

Source of all that is good and true and beautiful, keep constant in your musicians the conviction that your spirit works through them to reach a vast and countless number of souls who gather in sacred places for hope, assurance, grace and beauty, for some sign of your care, for solace from grief and loss, for strength to stand for justice, for a glimpse of wonder and mystery, for response to a need so hidden that it is known but to you alone.

Assure your musicians that the hours of practice, the rehearsals they lead, the anthems and psalms they accompany, the hymns they play, the service music they offer, the instrumental works they perform, the programs they organize, the words of encouragement they give are again and again the vessel of your spirit for healing the bruised, the lost, the broken and for setting free the holy aspirations of the human heart.

And since the souls that are saved by the secret ministries of music often find it too self-revealing, too frightening, to offer their thanks in person, may their unarticulated gratitude be gathered by the winds of your spirit and be borne to the hearts of your musicians as a gift to renew their faith so that they may continue to be instruments of proclamation and pastoral care as they lead your people in singing your everlasting praise.¹

May your blessing be upon us, O God, as we mark this 100th anniversary, and may you continue to bless us for the days, weeks, and years ahead. All glory be to you, O God, to whom we sing and play a hymn of endless praise, for ever and ever. AMEN.

Centennial Prayer by Father Robert Rien
Chaplain of the San Francisco Chapter of the American Guild of Organists
July 3, 2011

¹ With acknowledgement to The Reverend Dr. Thomas Troeger for his *Prayer for Church Musicians*.