

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday November 19, 2006

Franz Schubert died in Vienna on this day in 1828. He was only 31 years old. But he'd already composed over 600 songs, six settings of the Mass, chamber music, operas, and symphonies – including his famous "Unfinished Symphony."

Let us pray.

Lord: Your gift of time flies by so fast – faster than we'd thought it would. It seems there's too much to get done and always too much left "unfinished". So help us to put first things first, to seek Your Kingdom before all else. Reassure us that, if we do that, there'll be time enough for all else that's necessary. We read in Your word: "Today is the day of salvation" and "Today, if you hear His voice, don't harden your heart." Give us ears to hear those words of grace and peace that can break open cold and stony hearts. And may whatever time we have left be lived in the lifestyle of Your Kingdom.

Remind us, too, that our time in this world is time away from Home. Even so, may we be faithful here and now. Forbid it, Lord, that our Christian witness be so nauseatingly lukewarm as to warrant Your spewing it out of Your mouth. Help us to live the lifestyle of the cross, every single day. Forbid it, Lord, that we would be so ungrateful to You as to waste Your gifts of these precious days on earth in self-deceptive distractions of self-indulgence. Stop us from turning aside to worship idols that cannot save us. Keep our faith focused in You alone. And remind us that the night is coming when we will no longer be able to do what You've called us here to do. So may we seize the day, while it is today, for Your greater glory and the good of families and friends and, also, our foes.

This morning, Lord, we thank You for all the fine music You've given us through Your gifts to our brother, Franz. Receive our gratitude for the music, the art and the poetry that all draw us closer to the creative Source of what's really good and true and beautiful.

Bless us yet again in this, another hour of worship. May our need to worship You be met. May we gain a fresh awareness and a renewed gratitude for Your majesty and Your many mercies, that we might go forth from here nourished by Your Spirit for service. Thank You for hearing our prayers even apart from our poor utterance. Thank You for answering according to Your will, as we add these words we were taught to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.