

This evening you will hear the chanting of the Passion of our Lord as recorded by the evangelist St. Luke. Though this may be a new experience for you, it isn't very new at all for the church. The church has sung the lectionary* for centuries. They did this for a two reasons. One reason is pragmatics. Before microphones existed, singing the Scriptures projected the text into places that would otherwise swallow up the spoken words. Another reason though, and one that moves beyond pragmatics, is that singing slowed down the reading of the text and the language of music with its tones and notes interpreted the text for the hearer. The hearer was, for all practical purposes, hearing the Scriptures in two languages *simultaneously*. The language of the people, and the language of music.

I am indebted to Dr. Erik Herrmann, professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, for making available the musical setting of St. Luke's Passion account. Dr. Herrmann also offers the following information to aid in the listening of the Passion of our Lord set to music.

"The length of Luke's passion narrative (the longest of the gospels) is somewhat typical of his entire approach through our Lenten season—Luke brings us on a long journey alongside Jesus. From 9:51 onward Jesus is a pilgrim of the Holy City: 'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.' Some scholars have questioned the notion of a 'Lukan travel narrative' since Jesus can be found afterwards in Samaria, Bethany, between Samaria and Galilee and then Jericho. If Jesus is continually heading toward Jerusalem, this is certainly not the most direct route! But the completion of his long odyssey—his homecoming—is also unexpected and circuitous, an exodus that must first pass through bloody sweat and women's tears. The long wandering road to Zion and the promised kingdom, must first enter through the desert of death—the cross before paradise and the promise land."

Dr. Herrmann also says, "I've attempted to bring text and melody together as two 'languages' that simultaneously speak of the story of salvation and perhaps strike the ear—and faith (*faith comes by hearing!*)—in a new way."

This evening you will hear the chanting of the Passion of our Lord as recorded by the evangelist St. Luke. Though this may be a new experience for you, it isn't very new at all for the church. The church has sung the lectionary* for centuries. They did this for a two reasons. One

reason is pragmatics. Before microphones existed, singing the Scriptures projected the text into places that would otherwise swallow up the spoken words. Another reason though, and one that moves beyond pragmatics, is that singing slowed down the reading of the text and the language of music with its tones and notes interpreted the text for the hearer. The hearer was, for all practical purposes, hearing the Scriptures in two languages *simultaneously*. The language of the people, and the language of music.

I am indebted to Dr. Erik Herrmann, professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary, for making available the musical setting of St. Luke's Passion account. Dr. Herrmann also offers the following information to aid in the listening of the Passion of our Lord set to music.

"The length of Luke's passion narrative (the longest of the gospels) is somewhat typical of his entire approach through our Lenten season—Luke brings us on a long journey alongside Jesus. From 9:51 onward Jesus is a pilgrim of the Holy City: 'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.' Some scholars have questioned the notion of a 'Lukan travel narrative' since Jesus can be found afterwards in Samaria, Bethany, between Samaria and Galilee and then Jericho. If Jesus is continually heading toward Jerusalem, this is certainly not the most direct route! But the completion of his long odyssey—his homecoming—is also unexpected and circuitous, an exodus that must first pass through bloody sweat and women's tears. The long wandering road to Zion and the promised kingdom, must first enter through the desert of death—the cross before paradise and the promise land."

Dr. Herrmann also says, "I've attempted to bring text and melody together as two 'languages' that simultaneously speak of the story of salvation and perhaps strike the ear—and faith (*faith comes by hearing!*)—in a new way."

* lectionary—the term used to identify the appointed Scripture readings developed *by* the church and *for* the church. This year's lectionary can be found on pages xviii–xix in the very front of your hymnal.