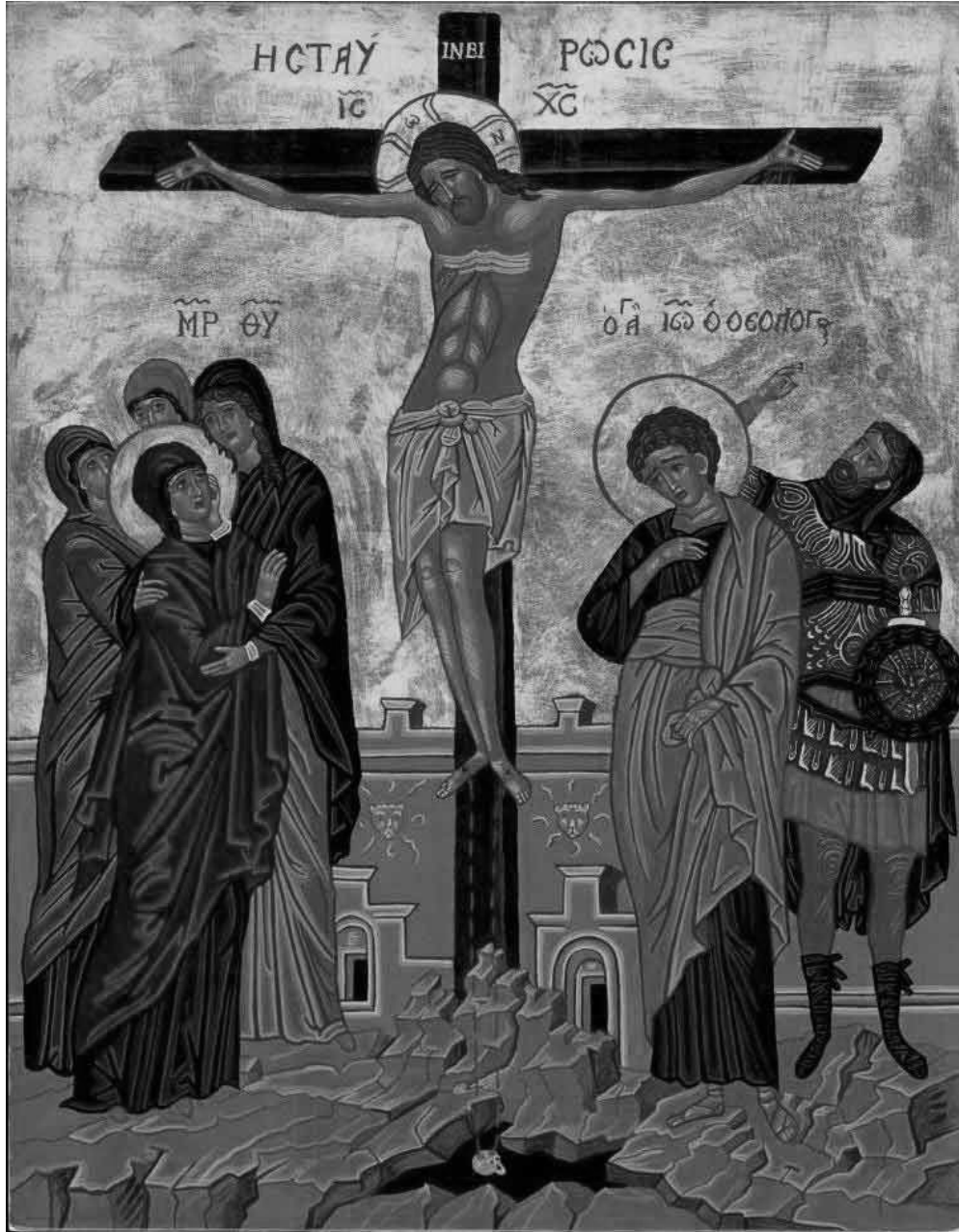


Readings from the poetry of Paul Claudel

STATIONS OF THE CROSS (*LE CHEMIN DE LA CROIX*)

Op. 29 by Marcel Dupré (1886-1971)



Ken Cowan
Organist

Carol Streatfeild
Reader

Friday, March 29, 2024
7:00 PM

PALMER MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

I. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Opening with a trumpet solo evoking Pilate's command, "Gardes, saisissez-vous de cet homme," ("guards, seize this man") the music becomes suddenly tumultuous, depicting an agitated crowd shouting for the release of Barrabas, and for Jesus to be put to death. The theme for "Barrabas" is the rhythm of the name, (if pronounced BAR-ra-bas) played on trumpet stops. The crushing two-note climax, "To death," which precipitates the quick dispersal of the mob, is heard again in station XII.

II. JESUS RECEIVES HIS CROSS

The March to Calvary begins, and the melodic theme of the Cross is heard repeatedly on reed registers; the stumbling steps of Jesus are illustrated in the accompaniment.

III. JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

The march continues. Labored sounding two-note groups describe Jesus' weariness. The theme for Suffering is heard high in the treble. Finally Jesus' strength fails and He falls under the weight of the cross. In the last few bars, the theme of Redemption is heard for the first time, pianissimo.

IV. JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

A flute solo with string tone accompaniment depicts the Mater Dolorosa. The rather chromatic harmonies of the accompaniment suggest her emotional turmoil. The same music will be heard again in Station XIII as she receives her son's lifeless body. The theme of Agony is heard because Mary's suffering is great.

V. SIMON THE CYRENE HELPS JESUS TO CARRY THE CROSS

Dupré evokes here a completely different atmosphere. We are in the countryside. The piece opens with pastoral sounding music played on flute stops. The listener might not be aware that this docile sounding accompaniment is voiced in an awkward fashion as if to make the performer feel a burden. Simon, on his way into the city from the countryside, lends reluctant assistance bearing the cross, and does not find it easy at first. He is first depicted clumsily helping Jesus carry the cross and trying to get into step as the procession moves. A series of canons between the outside parts depict Simon's attempts to assist. Finally the cross theme is heard united over a range of two octaves, above and below the accompaniment. Finally he has synchronized his steps with those of Jesus. The Cross theme is inverted, and near the end there is a brief appearance of the Redemption motif.

VI. JESUS AND VERONICA

Veronica comes out of the crowd to wipe Jesus' brow with a cloth, evoking the melodic theme of Compassion. The theme of the Cross is heard in the bass as Jesus pauses for a moment. As the movement ends, the Redemption motif is heard again, beautifully harmonized.

VII. JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

This station begins in the same slow, march-like rhythm heard at the beginning of the third station, but the accompaniment soon becomes more agitated. This is a more grotesque event than the first fall and the horror of the scene is matched with ever more grinding dissonance.

VIII. JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

There are some women present who feel pity for Jesus and the theme of Pity is a beautiful cantilena which pervades the entire movement, and will be heard again in Station XIV. The theme for consolation is heard in the tenor register played on a reed stop, representing Jesus' voice.

IX. JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

The crowd, now exasperated by the slow pace of the procession, fervently clamors for blood, and shouts insults. The principal theme here is Persecution- three repeated notes followed by an ascending diminished triad. A busy chromatic accompaniment recalls a frenzied crowd. The third and final fall is sudden and devastating, but now the place of execution, Calvary, has finally been reached and a brief period of calm follows before the final indignities are inflicted.

X. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS CLOTHES

The executioners strip Jesus of His clothes, and throw dice for His seamless coat. Dupré accompanies this scene with a rhythmic, sinister sounding piece played staccato on string stops. After a pause there follows the music of the Incarnation as if to remind the listener that for this purpose Jesus had come into the world. Jesus awaits His end, a pitiable figure indeed.

XI. JESUS IS NAILED ON THE CROSS

Hammering fortissimo chords expressing the violent cruelty of the executioners become the theme of Crucifixion. The theme for suffering (from Station III) is combined in longer phrases. The repetitive pedal line is an extension of the Cross motif, inverted.

XII. JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS

The agony of the slow passing hours is represented with a still sounding introduction containing a theme similar to that of Redemption. The dying Jesus speaks His seven last words. A sudden and violent crescendo by the organ represents the earthquake, and the rending of the veil of the temple. The repetition of the rhythmic theme representing the cry "to death!" from Station I (two repeated chords with a short-long rhythm) is repeated and the peak of this dramatic outburst. Jesus has been put to death. An uneasy stillness follows the final tremors.

XIII. JESUS' BODY IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS AND LAID IN MARY'S BOSOM

A fluid and unsettled sounding arabesque on flute stops evoking the whirling of ropes accompanies the descent from the cross and the slow sliding movements by which the body is brought down. The theme of the now-accomplished Redemption is present. Mary's music from Station IV is heard again at the end of this meditation as she holds the body of Jesus in her arms.

XIV. THE BODY OF JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Pity, the theme of the eighth station, is the dominant theme of the cortege preceding Jesus' entombment. The theme of suffering also accounts for a large portion of this final scene. The epilogue contains some subtle musical inspiration. A heavenly stillness envelops the scene. The theme of suffering, is now transformed into the Fruits of the Redemption. Flute melodies played high above illustrate the gates of heaven opening to those who participated in the events of that first Good Friday. As pointed out by Marcel Dupré's biographer Graham Steed, the last two notes of the Flute melody in the final station, G# and B natural are the same two notes, enharmonically changed and inverted that began the first station. The work ends as if to say "As for the way of the wicked, he turneth it upside down."

Following are eighteen themes or leit-motifs employed by Dupré in this work. Thirteen are melodic and six are rhythmic.

Melodic Themes:

1. The Cross (Stations II, V, VI, XI)

Two (sometimes three) ascending or descending leaps of perfect fourths, preceded and followed by a major second, rising or falling as the case may be.

2. Suffering (Stations III, IX, XIV)
A conjunct, descending triplet within the interval of a diminished fifth.
3. Redemption (Stations III, IV, V, VI, XIII)
An ascending group of four stepwise notes, the resulting interval of a fourth referencing the “cross” motif.
4. Mary (Stations IV, XII)
A descending major triad.
5. Compassion (Station VI)
Two disjunct intervals of the third, the second repeated.
6. Pity (Stations VIII, XIV)
An ascending group of four notes, preceded and followed by a dotted-note figure of repeated notes.
7. Consolation (Stations VIII, XII)
A perfect fifth, ascending, the second note dotted; drop of a fourth, rising to the major third, sounded on a reed stop.
8. Persecution (Station IX)
Three repeated notes followed by an ascending diminished triad.
9. Incarnation (final section of Station X)
Minor thirds ascending, 2 by 2 with repetition of each second note, the repetition conveying the idea of suffering accepted.
10. Crucifixion (Station XI)
The Cross motif inverted, and extended to a third downward jump of a perfect fourth.
11. Agony
Similar to Redemption theme, with the second note dotted, and with a fifth note added to the upward progression.
12. The Fruits of Redemption (Station XIV)
Suffering theme altered, the theme rising instead of falling.
13. The Crowd (Station I)
Intervals of major and minor thirds and fourths rising chromatically by semitones.

Rhythmic Themes:

14. Barrabas. (Station I)
The rhythm of the name. (pronounced BAR-ra-bas)
15. The crowd’s chant “to death!” (Station I and XII)
The rhythm of these words. (two repeated chords with a short-long rhythm)
16. Stumbling Steps or Jostling (Station II)
Iambic short note on the beat followed by a dotted note.
17. Weariness (Stations III, VII, IX)
Descending seconds, with repetition of the second note, suffering accepted.
18. Flagellation (Station X)
Pairs of triplets made up of a descending fourth followed by a rising seventh, the second triplet starting on the last note of the first.
19. The Ropes (Station XIII)
Four groups of triplets in a sliding chromatic outline.

The Way of the Cross by Paul Claudel

Translated by the Rev. John J. Burke, C.S.P.

FIRST STATION

The end. And God by us is judged and sent to death.
We wish no more of Jesus Christ. He vexes us.
Our only king is Caesar; gold and blood our law.
Kill Him, if such your will, but free our sight of Him.
Kill Him! So much the worse for Him. If one must die,
Barabbas set thou free, but crucify the Christ.
On the high judgment-place Pilate the ruler sits.

“Speakest Thou not?” he cries. But Jesus answers naught.
Then to the crowd: “In Him I find no wrong; yet, bah!
He dies since you persist. I yield. Behold the man!”
Behold Him, clothed in purple, crowned with piercing
thorns.

His blood-stained, tearful eyes meet ours in one last plea.
What can we do? We cannot keep Him with us now,
A scandal to His own; a folly unto us.
Sentence is passed; 'tis writ in Hebrew, Latin, Greek —
The crowd still shouts; the judge still washes clean his hands.

SECOND STATION

They clothe Him once again. To Him the cross is
brought.
“All hail”, cries Jesus Christ, “Long have I longed for thee.”
O see, my soul, and fear! Pregnant the solemn hour
When the eternal wood first pressed the Son of God.
Then Eden's tree full-grown bore fruit in Paradise.
Behold, O sinful soul, the end thy sin has served.
God triumphs over crime; on every cross hangs Christ.
The sin of man is great; but we are silent, mute.
Heaven's conquering God debates not, but fulfills.

Jesus accepts the cross as we receive Himself.
As Jeremiah said we give Him wood for food.
How huge that awful cross; how cumbersome and large;
Unyielding, painful, hard, a senseless sinner's weight.
To bear it step by step till one shall die thereon!
Dost Thou go forth to bear it, Saviour Christ, alone?

With patience may I bear what share Thou givest me.
Each one must bear the cross ere cross his comfort be.

THIRD STATION

He lingers not but presses on to Calvary's height,
At once the victim and the executioner.
Then God, stricken in swift collapse, falters and falls.

What sayest Thou, O Lord, at this Thy primal fall?
And as Thou knowest it, what thoughts arise within,
When thus sin hurls its evil weight on helpless Thee?
What answer gives the ground which Thou Thyself hast
made?

Other than virtue's path uneven is and hard.
Roughened is evil's way with windings treacherous.
Each turning must be made; each special roughness met.
The foot will often fail, though heart may persevere.
By Thy most holy knees whose weakness caused Thy fall,
By Thy heart straightened at the fearful way,
O Lord, by snare that trapped Thee and by earth that stung,
Save me from that first sin that takes one by surprise.

FOURTH STATION

Mothers, who saw in death your first and only born,
Recall that night, the infant's last — his helpless groans,
The water he refused, the ice, the rising pulse,
And death advancing now with final surety.
Put on again his tiny shoes, his little clothes,
From thee he will be taken back to earth again.
Farewell, my infant sweet, and life of my own self.

This station fourth is Mary who accepts in full.
She waits for Him, the richness of all poverty.
The tears dim not her eyes; parched is her mouth.
In silence absolute she looks at Him Who comes.
Her heart accepts; accepts again. The cry is crushed
Nor slightest utterance finds in her strong heart.
She utters not one word. Her eyes are fixed on Christ.
The mother sees her Son, the Church her Saviour true.
To Him her spirit speeds — a dying soldier's cry.
Before the eyes of God she opens her whole soul.
No part of it refusal knows nor drawing back.
And every fibre pierced, transfixed, accepts; consents.
As God is here in Will divine, so is her will.
Her heart accepts. She sees the Child her womb brought forth.
In holy silence now she sees the Saint of Saints.

FIFTH STATION

The moment comes at length when one cannot go on.
And then we find our touch with Thee, for Thou
Dost use us, even unto force, to share Thy cross.
So Simon there was drawn to bear his share of it.
With strength he seized the wood and followed Thee
Lest portion of Thy cross should drag or suffer loss.

SIXTH STATION

Disciples all have fled. Peter denied Him thrice.
Hurling herself 'gainst insults and the threat of death,
Veronica receives His Face between her hands.
Teach us, O woman brave, to conquer human fear.
To whom Christ is not an image but the truth,
Will come the questioning glance of other men.
He dwells upon a higher plane; he thinks apart.
Some strange love holds him distant; he is not the same.
An adult man, he says his beads; he tells his sins;
Friday he fasts; and with the women goes to Mass.
Of course he rouses laughter, yet he irritates.
Let him beware, for on him rests the eye of all.
Let him beware each step. He, sign and symbol is.
Each Christian, though unfit, is likeness true of Christ.
The face his soul doth show is reflex small
Of that true Face of God, debased yet glorious.
Let us behold again, Veronica, that veil
Which keeps in trust the Face of our Viaticum.
That sacred cloth imprints this Gatherer of grapes,
Lifted to ecstasy by His own harvest's fruit,
So that this likeness ever more may witness be
Of how is mixed our spittle with His blood and tears.

SEVENTH STATION

No stone has caused it, nor a halter drawn
The soul itself grows weak and suddenly we fall.
O years of middle life! O sin of one's own will!
The days their purpose lack; our faith sees no beyond.
For very long the way, and far, far off the end.
Alone, alone we drift and comfort draws not near.
O heavy-weighted time! Disgust that sickens self
The more because the shadow of the cross endures.
And then we stretch our arms, for one must swim or die.
Ah, no! not to our knees we fall but on our face.
Our body fails, 'tis true; the fall is of the soul.
Save us, O Lord, from hell of our own weariness.

EIGHTH STATION

Ere on the hill's steep side He climbs one further step,
He lifts His hand o'er those who followed Him
In tears — some women poor, each carrying her own child.
Let us look on and listen, too, for Jesus speaks.
The lifted Hand shows Him Who, Man, is more than
man.

This scene reveals the God Who suffered for our sake.
And, since He is our God, His act is for all time.
This day in very truth God suffers for our sins.
From what, then, and at what a price has He saved us?
Our tongue is beggared when we say "for this the Son
Was forced to tear Himself from His own Father's side."
If this the price at which we're saved, what then is hell?
If our sick souls ask this, what of the Christless dead?

NINTH STATION

Again I fall; prostrate I lie. This marks the end.
I could not if I wished it once more raise myself.
I lie as fruit that's crushed. I bear a weight too great.
I have done wrong. My dead self weighs on me.
Come, death! Easier 'tis to grovel than to stand.
I welcome death beneath, not on, this wretched cross.
Save us, O Lord, from this last fall, this last despair.
And now one only thing remains — to drink the cup of death.
The cross is lifted but the iron still must pierce.
A third time Jesus falls; but Calvary's height is reached.

TENTH STATION

Behold the threshing floor where grain divine is bruised.
The Father is revealed; the tabernacle rent.
A hand is laid on God and all flesh suffers shock.
Fear paralyzes all creation's deepest depths.
And now let us take heart to lift our eyes to Him,
Disrobed, of seamless garment stripped, Jesus all pure.
Nothing is left to Thee, for they have taken all.
They plucked the robe from Thee, as yesterday
They snatched from monk his cowl, from virgin nun
her veil.
Nothing is left wherewith he might beclothe Himself.
In naked helplessness, as naked as a worm,
Without defence He stands, exposed to sight of men.
What, this your Christ? This mocked, derided one?
This wretched man begrimed, a mass of wounds and sores,
A subject He for alienists and for the courts?
"Fierce bulls besiege me. Lord, deliver me from savage dogs."
He is not Christ, nor Son of Man; He is not God.
His gospel is a lie; His Father's not in heaven.
A fool! A fake! Why speaks He? What holds His tongue?
The High Priest's servant strikes: a French Renan betrays.

They left Thee stripped, but there remains Thy robe of blood;
They left Thee naught, but still that gaping wound is Thine.
Though God be hid away, here stands the Man of grief.
Though God be hid, I see my Brother here Who weeps.
By Thy humiliation, Lord, by Thy deep shame,
Pity the vanquished ones who to the stronger yield.
And by Thy ghastly clothing at the final hour,
Great pity have on all by bitter anguish pierced —
The little child who thrice must bear the surgeon's knife;
The wounded man whose wounds must be with pain
re-dressed;
The husband shamed; the son who mourns a mother
dead —
Have pity on that love which our hearts must uproot.

ELEVENTH STATION

Our Lord no longer stands with us, but prone He lies,
Thrown like a wounded stag amid the hunting pack.
Thou hast come down to us; to our own level reached.
One man sits on Thine arm; a knee is on Thy chest.
The hand that twists Thy Hand contorts the Hand of God.
The weakling Lamb tied by the feet is God in bonds.
Thy length of arm, Thy height are chalked upon the cross.
When He will taste the nails, His Face will be revealed.
The Son eternal, without measure, infinite,
Has emptied Self into this human mould He craved.
Behold in him Elias on the boy outstretched.
Behold this, David's throne; this, pride of Solomon.
Behold His nuptial couch with us so strong, so hard.
How God is straightened when He takes our human form.
The cross is placed. His Body, dislocated, cracks.
As by a heavy wine press He is crushed and torn.
With truth the prophet David said in ancient days
"My hands and feet are pierced. Revealed My every bone."
O Saviour, Thou wert bound; escape was not for Thee.
Upon the Cross the nails held Thee by hands and feet.
I seek no further now with heretic and fool.
This God, by these four nails constrained, suffices me.

TWELFTH STATION

He suffered, it is true; but now He suffers death.
The huge cross trembles darkly as our Saviour breathes.
Earth's power is done. To Him must now be left the work
That He alone can do. That Body and that Soul
In this One Person, God, have power without end.
Exhaust they must and will each unknown way of pain.
Alone He is, as Adam was in Eden's land.
Three hours alone, His Soul alone has drunk the Wine.
O ignorance unknown of God's own hidden life!

Our Host is wearied and His Head falls lower still.
He sees not Mary; and His Father, too, has gone.
He drains the cup. He drinks the slow-advancing death.
And yet He has not had enough of bitter drink,
For His own voice all suddenly exclaims: "I thirst!"
And in Thy thirst, O Lord, am I the one addressed?
Hast Thou, O Christ, still need of me and of my sins?
For me dost Thou await ere all be perfected?

THIRTEENTH STATION

The Passion ends. Mercy, its fruit, forever reigns.
Down from the cross, He lies within His mother's arms
—
Calvary perfected her will of Nazareth.
The Christ Who, lifted up, bore openly the shame,
His mother takes once more alone unto herself.
And in those arms the Church guards well her well-beloved.
What God sent forth, what Mary gave, what man has
done —
All, all is now within her heart forevermore.
She holds Him, sees and weeps, and in her tears adores.
She cerement and ointment is, and tomb and myrrh;
Altar and priest alike; chalice and cenacle.
The tabernacle door is gateway to the cross.

FOURTEENTH STATION

That tomb wherein the suffering Christ, now dead, was laid,
That sepulchre unsealed in haste that He might sleep
Before He rose again and with His Father reigned,
Is not a mere new burial-place — 'tis our own flesh,
'Tis man, your creature, Lord, more one with Thee
than earth.
Thy heart is open and Thy hands are deeply pierced;
Thou hast received, endured our bodies' every pain.
No sin but is o'erreached by Thy almighty wounds.
From altar here where Thou dost hide Thyself, come, Lord!
Our hearts are open thrown. Come, Lord, and fill their
depths.

JOIN US FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

HOLY SATURDAY | MARCH 30

10:00 AM “Easter Grace Garden” Making and Holy Saturday Prayers in the Courtyard

Everything will be provided, but you may also bring a flowerpot or shallow dish to fill.

7:00 PM The Great Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter, Rite II, in the Church

This service will include incense, hymns, and anthems by the adult choir.

EASTER DAY | MARCH 31

7:30 AM The Second Eucharist of Easter, Rite I, in the Church

This service will include hymns.

9:00 AM The Third Eucharist of Easter, Rite II, in the Church

This service will include hymns and anthems by the adult choir.

11:15 AM The Fourth Eucharist of Easter, Rite I, in the Church

This service will include incense, hymns, and anthems by the adult choir.

Along with the availability of free parking in the parking lots to the north and south of Palmer’s campus and along the Palmer side of Main Street, free parking is also available on the other side of Main Street at Rice University in the Founder’s Court parking lot. For information about where that’s located and how to take advantage of that offer, please use the following link to the Welcome Page on the church website, which also includes details about options for paid parking in the parking garages at Rice University’s Cambridge Office Building and Memorial Hermann Medical Plaza: <https://palmerchurch.org/welcome>

For more info visit palmerchurch.org/holyweek



**PALMER MEMORIAL
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

HOUSTON, TEXAS