

*St Paul's United Methodist Church
620 Romeo Street
Rochester, Michigan*

Presents

Marilyn Mason

Professor of Organ
University of Michigan

Performing

The Stations of the Cross

By

Marcel Dupre

with poem of

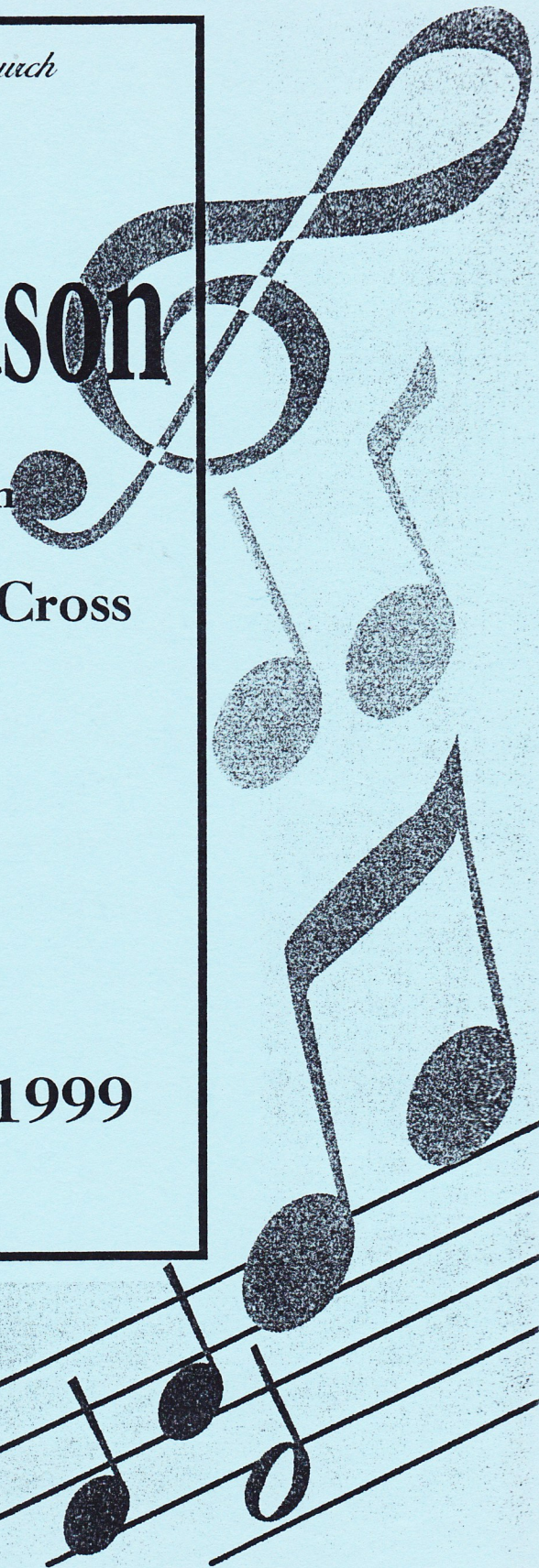
Paul Claudel

read by

Bradley Pfeifer

Sunday, March 7, 1999

7:00 p.m.



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MARILYN MASON, Organist

BRADLEY PFEIFER, Narrator

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LE CHEMIN de la CROIX, Op. 29

MARCEL DUPRÉ
(1886-1971)

On poems by Paul Claudel
translated by Gale Kramer & Sister Judith Schweiss

- I. Jésus est condamné à mort
- II. Jésus est chargé de la Croix
- III. Jésus tombe sous le poids de sa Croix
- IV. Jésus recontre sa Mère
- VII. Jésus tombe à terre pour la seconde fois
- VIII. Jésus console les filles d'Israel qui le suivent
- XI. Jésus est attaché sur la Croix
- XII. Jésus meurt sur la Croix
- XIII. Jésus est détaché de la Croix et remis à sa Mère
- XIV. Jésus est mis dan le sépulcre

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS, OP. 29
LE CHEMIN DE LA CROIX

Poems by Paul Claudel

"The Stations or Way of the Cross" refer to a series of pictures or tableaux representing certain scenes in the Passion and Death of Christ, each corresponding to a particular incident connected with the Passion. They are usually arranged at intervals around the walls of a church. . . . The object of the Stations is to help the faithful make in spirit a pilgrimage to the principal scenes of Christ's passion and death. The devotion is carried out by passing from Station to Station, meditating on each incident represented in the tableaux. . . . The origin of this devotion is traced to the Holy Land. The route Christ traveled from the place of sentencing to Calvary has been marked since the earliest years of Christianity, and has been the object of pilgrimage since the days of Constantine. There is, however, no direct evidence of a set form of devotion until the seventeenth century, at which time the number of Stations was fixed at fourteen.

The Catholic Encyclopedia, XV

Dupré has placed himself before the drama as a witness who could in his emotions take up the words of the apostle: "What I have seen, what I have heard - that is what I have to say to you." He has seen, and heard the two principal actors of the drama: Christ and the Virgin.

The Christ as Victim - we foresee it everywhere: from the first Station with the cries of the crowd pursuing him; we hear him stumble under the weight of the cross, but it is at the eighth Station that he reveals himself in a gesture of pity toward the "daughters of Israel who follow him." Crushed under the burden, he falls shortly afterwards at the ninth Station; it is upon him alone that our eyes are fixed, when stripped of his garments, nailed upon the cross, he speaks a last time to his Father before dying.

The Virgin shattered by grief: a striking figure which appears at the fourth Station. While the drama is taking place, she remains apart. When all is consummated she advances again to receive the body of her son.

Music of Organ by Marcel Dupré

Around these two personages, other secondary figures are sketched: the Holy women whose meeting furnishes a temporary halt to the ascent to Calvary; Simon the Cyrenian, his steps adjusted little by little to those of the Victim; Veronica, who cannot withhold a gesture of pity, crowned by the Miracle at the close of the sixth Station.

Thus the personages: here now is the setting amid which they move - first, the praetorium where the crowd mills around, shouts, then little by little melts away.

Then begins the climb toward Calvary, translated from the second Station by an expressive rhythm: a solemn cortege which will become, at the fourteenth Station, a funeral march for the placing of the body in the tomb. Christ falls heavily, having arrived at the place of torture; his body is hoisted to the Cross by the ropes which grate; the blows of the hammer resound, the earth trembles, and finally, while the funeral procession leads us to the entrance of the tomb, by a magnificent lightening effect, the dawn of the Resurrection, felt little by little throughout the work, rises and illumines by its radiant tonality.

--Abbe R. Delestre, *L'Oeuvre de Marcel Dupré*
translated by Dr. E. L. Ford