



**LE CHEMIN  
DE LA CROIX**

*The Way of the Cross*

*by*

**MARCEL DUPRÉ**

**MARILYN MASON**

*Organist*

*Wednesday of Holy Week*

*March 27, 2002 + 7:00 pm*

*Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church*

*2331 E. Adams Street + Tucson, Arizona*

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# LE CHEMIN DE LA CROIX

Marcel Dupré

Inspired by the poems of Paul Claudel

Marilyn Mason

Organ

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| I. <i>Jésus est condamné à mort</i><br>Jesus is condemned to death                                 | VIII. <i>Jésus console les femmes de Jérusalem</i><br>Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem                       |
| II. <i>Jésus est chargé de Sa Croix</i><br>Jesus receives the Cross                                | IX. <i>Jésus tombe pour la troisième fois</i><br>Jesus falls for the third time                                   |
| III. <i>Jésus tombe pour la première fois</i><br>Jesus falls the first time                        | X. <i>Jésus est dépouillé de Ses vêtements</i><br>Jesus is stripped of His clothes                                |
| IV. <i>Jésus rencontre Sa Sainte Mère</i><br>Jesus meets His Mother                                | XI. <i>Jésus est mis en Croix</i><br>Jesus is nailed to the Cross   |
| V. <i>Jésus est aidé par Simon de Cyrène</i><br>Simon the Cyrene helps Jesus<br>to carry His Cross | XII. <i>Jésus meurt en Croix</i><br>Jesus dies upon the Cross   |
| VI. <i>Véronique essuie la Face de Jésus</i><br>Veronica wipes the Face of Jesus                   | XIII. <i>Jésus est détaché de la Croix</i><br>Jesus is taken from the Cross<br>and laid in the arms of His Mother |
| VII. <i>Jésus tombe pour la deuxième fois</i><br>Jesus falls the second time                       | XIV. <i>Jésus est mis au tombeau</i><br>Jesus is laid in the tomb   |

### ***Narrative***

*The poems of Paul Claudel are read by  
The Rev. Gordon K. McBride and  
Ms. Anne B. Parker*

*English translation by  
Gene Kramer and Sr. Judith Schweiss*

### ***Reception***

*Following the concert, please join us for a reception  
in honor of Professor Mason presented by the  
Southern Arizona Chapter of the American Guild of  
Organists. It is in the Parish Hall, directly west of the  
Labyrinth Courtyard.*

### ***Concert Angels***

*Thank you to the following for their generous  
donations in support of this concert event:*

*Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Heinlein  
Mrs. Howard Kroehl  
Mr. Clyde Kunz & Mr. Brian Arthur  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Reed  
Dr. & Mrs. Andrew Smith*

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### ***STATIONS OF THE CROSS***

The Stations of the Cross are a series of pictures or tableaux representing certain scenes in the Passion and Death of Jesus. They are arranged at intervals around the walls of many churches. They depict the route that Christ traveled from the place of sentencing to Calvary, which has been the object of pilgrimage since the days of Constantine, when pilgrims returned to show their friends what they had visited. In 1741 Pope Pius IX regularized the devotion in the form in which it is known today.

### ***THE MUSIC***

France has long nurtured the composition of great music and, in particular, great organ music. Stretching from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century settings of plainchant hymns and canticles of Titelouze, continuing with the great "Organ Books" of composers du Mage and d'Andrieu, the quaint "Noëls" of d'Aquin, through the monumental Masses of Couperin, this creativity revived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century even after the violent interruption of the 1789 Revolution.

The recovery of organ composition began with the Belgian-born Franck, inspired by the expressive and powerful organ ensembles of Cavallé-Coll, who built nearly every important French organ of the 1800s. A school of writing thus was begun that emphasized a "symphonic" organ: with individual organ stops imitating orchestral instruments and compositions with multiple movements replicating those of the symphony.

These powerful influences set the stage for the two monumental French "symphonists": Widor and Vierne. These men, the former at the Paris Conservatory and the latter at Notre Dame Cathedral, instructed and mentored the first 20<sup>th</sup> century generation of organist and composers: Tournemire, Messiaen, Duruflé, and Dupré.

Dupré emerged on the French organ scene with meteoric effect. Celebrated for his ability to improvise, he improvised the precursor to today's work while on a tour of Belgium in 1931. Dupré performed a Lenten recital at the Brussels Conservatory on February 13, 1931 where, after performing a group of Bach organ works, he provided his musical impressions between readings of the Claudel poems, read by Mine. Madeleine Renaud-Thevenet, a professor there. During the following year, he perfected the work, publishing them as *Le Chemin de la*

*Croix*, giving them the first performance at the Palais de Trocadero in Paris, on March 18, 1932.

Dupré's powerful score, also translated as *The Stations of the Cross*, contains some of the most wrenching music ever created for the organ. Recurring themes, known as "leitmotifs," provide a unity to the whole.

(I.) In Station I, the crowd is heard shouting "Barabbas" and "death", after opening to Pilate's sentence, until the clamor dies away in the distance.

(II.) The theme of the Cross emerges from the underlying tumult in Station II, accompanied by the rhythm of the march to Calvary.

(III.) In Station III, the growing painfulness of the march is expressed by breaks in the rhythm, while the theme of suffering tells of the exhaustion of Jesus until He falls. But the quiet serene theme of redemption ends the Station filling the hearts of His disciples with hope.

(IV.) The grief of the Virgin is expressed by no outburst. Instead, a feeling of stupor and of quiet horror runs throughout Station IV, with just a gentle moaning issuing from her heart.

(V.) The music of Station V stresses the tremendous effort that Simon has to make to help carry the Cross until he succeeds in adjusting his steps to those of Jesus.

(VI.) Station VI is wrapped in an archaic atmosphere, with the themes of compassion and redemption.

(VII.) Again, in Station VII, the howling of the crowd is heard and the halting march grows more and more painful.

(VIII.) Two themes are heard in Station VIII: that of the sorrow of the Holy Women, like

a lamentation, and the theme of consolation with which Jesus replies, until both themes blend, leaving an impression of peace.

(IX.) The shouts and cries of the furious crowd fill Station IX and stop only with the sudden fall of the Savior.

(X.) In Station X, an agitated theme expresses the violence and hurry with which He is stripped of His garments, when suddenly a theme of pity rises at the sight of the pitiful Victim.

(XI.) Station XI is dominated by the rhythm of the blows of the hammer driving the nails into the hands and feet of Jesus while the theme of suffering breaks through.

(XII.) The seven last words fall from His lips in Station XII. Then, as He dies, the rumble of the earthquake is heard, followed by soft plaintive accents expressing the grief of Jesus' disciples.

(XIII.) The theme of the Virgin's sorrow hovers over Station XIII.

(XIV.) The slow mournful rhythm of the Cortège opens Station XIV while the themes of suffering, consolation, and redemption are heard successively and the work ends in a vision of hope.

*Le Chemin de la Croix* must be counted as a sincere, highly motivated work, unsparing in its description of grief, agony, horror, and torture. Balancing these dark sounds are luminous scenes of poignancy, hope, and consolation. Without question, this is among the most significant and moving organ works of the last century.

## THE COMPOSER

Marcel Dupré (1886-1971) was born into a musical family in Rouen, France, May 3, 1886. His father was the organist of the St. Ouen's Church and he received his early lessons from him. Dupré studied piano with Louis Diemer and Guilmant, organ with Vierne, and fugue and composition with Widor. He won the *Prix de Rome* in 1914 for his cantata *Psyche*.

He had a long and distinguished career as concert organist, church musician, improviser, teacher, and composer. He revolutionized the organ concert in 1920 when he performed the complete works of J.S. Bach by memory at a series of concerts at the Paris Conservatory. He toured the U.S. in 1921 and played 94 recitals in 85 cities; on his second tour in 1923 he performed 110 recitals. In 1939, he did a world concert tour and in 1953 celebrated his 1900th concert. In contrast, his church music career had a singular focus. He succeeded Widor at the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris in 1934 and remained at that position until his death at age 85.

A legendary improviser, Dupré would often conclude his performances with a major improvisation. In 1926, he published his *Traité*

*d'improvisation a l'orgue*. From 1926 to 1954, Dupré was a professor of organ at the Paris Conservatory where his pupils included J. Alain and Messiaen.

The majority of his compositions are either for organ or contain prominent organ parts. These works, postimpressionistic in style, are cast mostly in traditional forms associated with organ or liturgical music and include symphonic poems of religious character. His *Seventy-Nine Chorales*, where Dupré composed a chorale prelude for each chorale that Bach had composed, is still a standard teaching tool for beginning organists.

## THE POET

Diplomat and author, Paul Claudel (1868-1955) served France as its official representative in embassies in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. He became the acclaimed voice of its cultural heritage through his many writings. *Le Chemin de la Croix* was first published as part of his "Corona Benignitatis Anni Del," a cycle of 56 poems on the liturgical year.

## *THE ORGANIST*

Among the important influences on the American organ scene in the second half of the 20th century, Marilyn Mason certainly has made a lasting impact in her distinguished career as concert organist, lecturer, adjudicator, teacher, organ consultant, recording artist, and by the nearly 75 organ works that she has commissioned. Her name commands immediate recognition among organists today, confirming her impact more than 50 years after she made her debut.

Dr. Mason is University Organist, Professor of Music, and Chair of the Organ Department of The University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Her affiliation with Michigan began in 1944 as she began her undergraduate studies there under Palmer Christian, later completing her M.Mus. degree. And, except for a year spent in France where she studied analysis with Nadia Boulanger and organ with Maurice Duruflé and time studying for her Doctor of Sacred Music degree at Union Theological Seminary in New York, she has spent her entire career in Ann Arbor.

Dr. Mason has been recognized consistently by the faculty. First, as an undergraduate, she was awarded the Stanley Medal, the highest award to any music major. Later, in her teaching career, her colleagues presented her with the Distinguished Faculty Award and music alumni awarded her the first Citation of Merit.

During her time at Michigan, annual summer and fall organ music conferences have become regular highlights, along with organ tours abroad to see and hear historic organs, and the installation of the Marilyn Mason Organ in a specifically built recital hall. This organ, built by C. B. Fisk, is a replica in spirit of the instruments of the great 18<sup>th</sup> century organ builder, Gottfried Silbermann, whose organs Bach knew well.

Dr. Mason has performed on every continent, save Antarctica. She was the first American woman organist to play in Westminster Abbey, the first woman organist to play in Latin America, and the first American to play in Egypt. She has served as judge at nearly every major organ competition in the world.

Her dedication to modern organ music is evidenced by the names of influential composers who have written for her: Albright, Bolcom, Cook, Cowell, Creston, Diemer, Haines, Jackson, David N. Johnson, Jordan, Krenek, Langlais, Lockwood, Near, Persichetti, Sowerby, Wyton, and Young.

Dr. Mason recently completed a recording of the complete works of Johann Pachelbel for the Musical Heritage Society. In 1987, Dr. Mason was awarded the degree Doctor of Music *honoris causa* from the University of Nebraska. In 1988, she was honored by the New York Chapter of the American Guild of Organists as the organ "Performer of the Year."