

The Plaintive Season of Lent.

In the Scriptures and in the Music of the Season, we hear the call of our relentlessly loving Creator beckoning us: "Come back to me, with all your heart."

Winter's dark days slowly surrender to the incessant pull of the light. The hint of Spring begins to take the chill off the evening breeze. In the quiet stillness, we sense the thaw, the softening of the ground - and of our hearts.

During this reflective and renewing season of Lent, the scriptures, and the repertoire of music which flow from them, remind us of loving God's gentle, but persistent, invitation: "Come back to Me, with all your heart."

The journey is so much more than the simple "turning away from sin" that, as children, characterized our understanding of this season. As proactive journeyers on our spiritual path, Lent is less the negative turning *away from* things, as it is the positive turning *to* our gracious Creator. It is in the revitalizing of our openness to God (prayer), the refocusing of our energies from ourselves to others, (almsgiving) and the development of a rounded consciousness

that is aware of the interplay of mind, body and soul (fasting) that we most fully hear this Divine invitation to love.

The music of this season is every bit as rich as the Catholic imagination that shapes it.

Reflecting the breadth and depth of repertoire which draws from chants of the 6th^h Century, moves through the classic music of the 19th and 20th centuries, and opens to the exceptionally insightful works of contemporary liturgical composers like Bernadette Farrell and Marty Haugen, the music we pray as we sing as a parish here this Season will not only speak to us of this Lenten call to prayer, almsgiving and fasting, but remind us that this is all a part of our preparation for the Triduum, the joyful feast of our Easter Baptism, and our

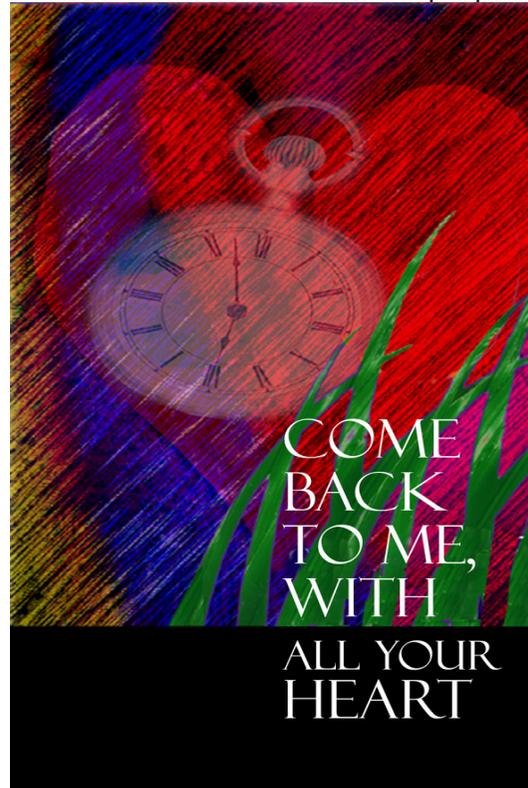
communion with the catechumens and candidates preparing for their Sacraments of Initiation.

While our Lenten eyes drink in the rich purples of our decor, our ears will

experience a distinctly seasonal sound. Through all the chants and hymns, we hear tones reserved, but not somber, spare but not grave, joyful, but restrained by our knowledge that we still have the journey to walk. We are, in this season, and in all, a people aware that the Reign of God's Love is a reality already accomplished, and yet still a work in progress.

Our Gathering Ritual throughout the season is an entrance rite based on the ancient Latin chant "Parce Domine," entreating our God to "Hold us in your mercy."

In the earliest weeks of this season we sing the plaintive cry of the prophet Hosea, whose personal experience of his own spouse's infidelity reminds him of God's



loving call to “Come back to me, with all your heart--don’t let fear keep us apart,” the yearning melody of Bernadette Farrell’s treatment of Psalm 90 “Restless Is the Heart,” and the Passion Chorale tune “O Sacred Head” set to Lenten lyrics “We Yearn O Christ for Wholeness.”

As the season progresses we remember that we are “Led by the Spirit,” a Lenten text set to the classic Kingsfold tune “I Heard the Voice of Jesus.” And, as our desert Lenten observance brings us closer to the mysteries of the Triduum and the renewing waters of Easter, we raise our voices to the challenging call of loving service in “Ubi Caritas” and “Where Charity and Love Prevail.”

May the music we pray together as a community during this Season of journeying to the God whose Love is so palpably revealed to us in the celebrations of the Triduum, keep us focused on that road to which we are invited, and joyful as we share together our longing to respond in kind to our God’s gracious invitation “Come Back to Me.”

