

LITANY OF THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS

Optional Unison Choir, One or Two Cantors, optional String Instrument, Assembly

Thomas Benson Pollack, 1836–1896
Adapt. by A.J.H.

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PART I

RESPONSE

Cantor/All [b]

Hear us, ho - ly Je - sus.

or

ALTERNATE RESPONSE

Cantor/All [b]

Ky - ri - e — e - lei - son.

RECITATIVE - Lk 23:34

Expressively dramatic

Cantor *To Verses*

Fa - ther, for - give them, for they know — not what — they do.

VERSES 1–3

Cantor I

1. Je - sus, in your dy - ing — woes, E - ven while your life - blood — flows,
2. Sav - ior, for our par - don — sue When our sins your pains — re - new,
3. O may we, who mer - cy — need, Be like you in heart — and — deed,

Cantor II/Unison Choir/String Instrument

To Response

1. Beg - ging par - don for — your — foes:
2. For we know not what — we — do:
3. When with wrong our spir - its — bleed:

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Performance Notes: Each part consists of a Recitative, three Verses, and a Response. Cantor intones the response the first time, all repeat. The response after each verse is sung by all. The second line of the verses may be hummed by the choir while the cantor sings. The second line may also be played on a bowed string instrument.

If two cantors are used, they may alternate between the chant responses, recitatives, and verses.

PART II

RECITATIVE - Lk 23:43

Expressively dramatic

Cantor

To Verses

To - day you shall be with me in par - a - dise.

VERSES 4-6

Cantor I

4. Je - sus, pi - ty - ing the sighs Of the thief who near you dies,
5. May we, in our guilt and shame, Still your love and mer - cy claim,
6. May our hearts to you in - cline, Look - ing from our cross to find

Cantor II/Unison Choir/String Instrument

To Response

4. Prom - is - ing him par - a - dise:
5. Call - ing hum - bly on your Name:
6. On your cross our hope di - vine:

RESPONSE

All [b]
Hear us, ho - ly Je - sus.

ALTERNATE RESPONSE

All [b]
or
Ky - ri - e e - lei - son.

PART III

RECITATIVE - Jn 19:26-27

Expressively dramatic

Cantor

To Verses

Wo - man, be - hold — your son. Be - hold your moth - er.

VERSES 7-9

Cantor I

7. Je - sus, lov - ing to — the — end Her whose heart your sor - rows — rend
8. May we in your sor - rows — share, For your sake all per - il — dare,
9. May we all your loved — ones — be, All one ho - ly fam - i - ly

Cantor II/Unison Choir/String Instrument

To Response

7. And your dear - est hu - man — friend:
8. And en - joy your ten - der — care:
9. Lov - ing as you love, — so — free:

RESPONSE

All [b]

Hear us, ho - ly Je - sus.

ALTERNATE RESPONSE

All [b]

or

Ky - ri - e — e - lei - son.

PART IV

RECITATIVE - Mk 15:34

Expressively dramatic

Cantor

My— God, my— God, why have you for - sak - en me? *To Verses*

VERSES 10-12

Cantor I

10. Je - sus bowed in fears un - known, With our e - vil left— a - lone,
 11. When we seem in vain— to— pray, And our hope seems far— a - way,
 12. Though no Fa - ther seems to— hear, Though no light our spir - its— cheer,

Cantor II/Unison Choir/String Instrument
To Response

10. While no light from heav'n is— shown:
 11. In the dark-ness be— our— stay:
 12. May we know that God— is— near:

RESPONSE

All

[b]

Hear us, ho - ly Je - sus.

ALTERNATE RESPONSE

All

[b]

or

Ky - ri - e— e - lei - son.

To Response

16. By your suf-f'rings, per - fect— made:
 17. While we grow in ho - li - ness:
 18. Till we pass to per - fect— day:

RESPONSE

All [b]

Hear us, ho - ly Je - sus.

or

ALTERNATE RESPONSE

All [b]

Ky - ri - e — e - lei - son.

PART VII

RECITATIVE - Lk 23:46

Expressively dramatic

Cantor

In - to your hands I — com - mend my spir - it. *To Verses*

VERSES 19-21

Cantor I

19. Je - sus, all your la - bor — vast, All your woe and con - flict — past;
 20. When the shades of death draw — low'r, Guard us from temp - ta - tion's — pow'r,
 21. May your life and death sup - ply Grace to live and grace — to — die,

*Cantor II/Unison Choir/String Instrument**To Response*

19. Yield-ing up your soul — at — last:
 20. Keep us in our fi - nal — hour:
 21. Grace to reach our home - on — high:

RESPONSE

All [b]

Hear us, ho - ly Je - sus.

or

ALTERNATE RESPONSE

All [b]

Ky - ri - e — e - lei - son.