Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed, *Prex Eucharistica*, and various one-volume histories of the Mass. One might hope for a further volume that would address the historical development and theological implications of the architectural setting, the objects and vesture employed, and the music adorning Eucharistic worship through the ages, but that lies beyond the purview of this magnificent book.

Jan Michael Joncas

Contemplative Evensong: Unlocking the Spiritual Power of the Sung Office

Charles Hogan. MorningStar, 2015. ISBN 978-0-944529-69-0. 109 pages, softcover, $15.00.

This is not a "how to" book toting the latest musical settings of some composer. Charles Hogan delivers much more because it belongs on the shelf with other liturgical primers.

Hogan serves the Anglican Church and suggests that, rather than modeling it after Vespers, Evensong might be closer to Compline, using "fixed contemplative chants sprinkled with modern harmonies in a candlelight service closer to bedtime" (page xii).

Chapter One, "A Rationale for the Power of the Office in Contemporary Life," is a brilliant synthesis of church history, Vatican II, and the liturgical and sociological events of the past fifty years. Hogan quotes a broad array of authors on every side of the musical and liturgical fence as he provides scientific and spiritual understanding of the power of music within our lives. He suggests that, in the postconciliar revisions, "except for the responsorial psalm, a large number of Roman Catholic churches in America abandoned chant altogether, 'pride of place' being reserved for the popular folk music style" (page 15), and then he shows how the Church is moving beyond that now.

Evensong opens the door for those seeking interiority: "They combine the ancient with the modern, the intellectual with the sensory" (page 28). They transform minds and spirits and lay a foundation for Eucharist. The question might be: "Why *not* turn to these liturgies?"

Chapter Two offers a "Rationale for the Legacy of Plainchant and Evensong." Explaining benefits of both festive prayer and contemplative prayer, the author takes one through the development of the Benedictine and Roman Hours and English Prayer and provides clear, concise diagrams to contrast them. He encourages quiet, peaceful prayer several times: "The quietness of Compline and its chants instills peace to the soul living in an uncertain world" (page 40). "We as the contemporary Church need a liturgy which conveys our desire for quietness and our thirst for a God who will care for us children" (page 41).

In Chapter Three, "Singing and Teaching Chant," which is more textbook, Hogan offers a premise that is reason enough to read this book. Often when people dislike chant, he says, the fault is in the *execution*, not the *genre*. He guides the reader through matching the right chant formula and rhythm; proper text pointing using plainchant, *fauxbourdon*, and Anglican chant; breathing; and conducting.

Chapter Four offers "Practical Aspects of Creating a Contemplative Service." Candles, icons, and lighting, combined with fragrance with candles and incense, all play strong roles in creating this space as well as a fixed focal point and limited instrumentation. There are clear details for structuring Evensong here.

Chapter Five, "Adapting the Evensong Liturgy for Other Churches," provides specific examples and adaptations for many

mainstream Christian traditions. In his concluding remarks, the author cajoles: "We ask the voice of Integrity to assist us in choosing chants and music and prayers which create complementary wholeness in our service and ultimately reconnect us with our God of solace and strength."

I would recommend this book for anyone wanting to offer Evensong or Vespers—to refresh their own liturgical theology or wrap their head around all the issues and discussions surrounding the new evangelization of the Church—and anyone wanting simply to still and satisfy their soul.

Jill Maria Murdy

In Their Own Words: Slave Life and the Power of Spirituals

Eileen Guenther. MorningStar, 2016. ISBN 978-0-944529-71-3. 518 pages, paperback, $28.00.

This has to be the most comprehensive work done on the "Negro spiritual" to date. Author and scholar Eileen Guenther has gathered information on the rich music we know today as the "Negro spiritual" that is both academic and practical. (My use of the term "Negro" is intentional, so as to remind readers of the history of this music and the source community as they were referred to historically.)

The text, close to 500 pages, covers the multi-faceted, multi-layered complexity of this music. Guenther begins by defining the spiritual, drawing from the work of other writers and scholars as they describe this music as a community's response to their social condition. This writer has heard performances and arrangements of the spirituals that indicate the performer or arranger clearly had no idea about the pain, suffering, heartache, and hardship that birthed this music. Otherwise, the cavalier attitude and even occasional frivolity with which the music has been rendered would have given way to the seriousness and respect that this music rightfully deserves. In her introduction, Guenther states: "Spirituals are powerful, beautiful music of sorrow and of hope. They enrich the life of the

singer as well as the listener. Regardless of the race or circumstance of the singer or audience, this is music that speaks to the human condition—and it speaks 'from the heart to the heart.'"

Guenther briefly lays out for the reader the African roots which contribute to the flavor and character of this music, evinced in call-and-response, rhythmic syncopations, and the improvisatory nature of the music. Guenther appropriately credits the degree to which exposure to European music influenced the creation of the spirituals as well as Christianity's influence on their development. The slaves heard the biblical stories which served as textual foundation for many of the spirituals, and they were subject to the slave masters' theological interpretation of the Scriptures as they attended worship services either in specially provided sections of white churches or in worship spaces made specifically for them. Though the sermons that were preached to the enslaved Africans suggested that they ought to obey their earthly masters, the slaves deduced for themselves that slavery was "not part of God's plan, and they were meant to be free" (page 154).

Leaders and scholars often comment on the culture of others, and thus the culture of a people is interpreted through another's lens, one that is unable to give voice to the culture of the very people whose culture is being defined. However, a unique feature of this text is that Guenther privileges the voices of the very people from whom this music emanates. We hear the slaves themselves describe their conditions, their worship, and how they came to create this music. Guenther lays out for us the history of slavery from the *Maafa* (Transatlantic slave trade or, more graphically, the African Holocaust) and the Middle Passage to the slave rebellions that took place. She covers the origins of this music from ring shout to post-slavery spirituals, as well as arranged or "concert" spirituals, to the music's use in the Civil Rights Movement.

There are three great features of this resource for the pastoral musician or any musician seeking to understand this music and use it for liturgy, instruction or formation, or simply in performance. First, there is a chapter on performance practice which covers use of dialect, tempi, and invaluable insights on interpretation, referencing such historical figures as R. Nathaniel Dett and James Weldon Johnson as well as contemporaries in the field like Anton E. Armstrong and André J. Thomas. Second, there is a chapter in which Guenther discusses the spirituals according to their themes or subject matter. For liturgy planners or those looking to program repertoire for concerts, this will be a most valuable aid. There is even a section in this chapter where the author explains code songs and songs with double or hidden meanings. Third, there are two appendices at the end of the book. One is a biblical concordance that lists 100 spirituals in alphabetical order and provides scriptural references as quoted or alluded to in the spiritual text; the other is a Bible concordance which suggests spirituals according to their biblical allusions or references but arranged according to the books of the Bible.

M. Roger Holland, II

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