

Editor's Notes for Lamentación Tercera del Miércoles Santo

This is Eslava's setting for the Third Lamentation for Holy Wednesday, which continues a series of nine pieces for Holy Week.

The Book of Lamentations in the Bible forms part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Holy Week (the week preceding Easter Sunday), signifying the important themes of lament, atonement, and repentance that underlay the Paschal festivities. The Lamentations consist of three sets of three lectures, for Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Over time, the tradition moved from morning matins to the night before, so that in some cases the Lamentations are named for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Such is the case for Eslava's Lamentations.

This third lamentation is based on Lamentations 1:10-14. As used in the Catholic liturgy, the text comes from the Latin Vulgate text. But the translators of the Vulgate decided to keep a trace of the original arrangement of the poetry, and kept the Hebrew letter at the beginning of each verse, which is prominently reflected in Eslava's work. Each lecture is ended with the call: "Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum" ("Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God"), which actually comes from Hosea 14:1. This too is reflected in Eslava's pieces.

ORIGINAL TEXT:

JOD. Manum suam misit hostis ad omnia desiderabilia eius: quia vidit Gentes ingressas sanctuarium suum, de quibus præceperas ne intrarent in ecclesiam tuam.

CAPH. Omnis populus eius gemens, et quærens panem: dederunt pretiosa quæque pro cibo ad refocillandam animam. Vide Domine et considera, quoniam facta sum vilis.

LAMED. O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus: quoniam vindemiavit me ut locutus est Dominus in die iræ furoris sui.

MEM. De excelso misit ignem in ossibus meis, et erudit me: expandit rete pedibus meis, convertit me retrorsum: posuit me desolatam, tota die mœrore confectam.

NUN. Vigilavit iugum iniquitatum mearum: in manu eius convolutæ sunt, et impositæ collo meo: Infirmata est virtus mea: dedit me Dominus in manu, de qua non potero surgere.

Jerusalem convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

JOD. The enemy has sent his hand against all her desirable ones. For she has watched the Gentiles enter her sanctuary, even though you instructed that they should not enter into your church.

CAPH. All her people are groaning and seeking bread. They have given up whatever was precious in exchange for food, so as to remain alive. See, O Lord, and consider, for I have become vile.

LAMED. O all you who pass by the way, attend, and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow. For he has made me a vintage, just as the Lord has spoken in the day of his furious anger.

MEM. From on high, he has sent fire into my bones, and he has educated me. He has spread a net for my feet; he has turned me back. He has placed me in desolation, consumed by grief, all day long.

NUN. Vigilant is the yoke of my iniquities. They have been folded together in his hand and imposed on my neck. My virtue has been weakened. The Lord has given me into a hand, out of which I am not able to rise.

Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God.