Introduction

The singing of the Passion is an ancient practice in the Latin Rite. The music gives the proclamation both a solemnity and an intensity that is appropriate for the Good Friday liturgy.

The Music: Sung Speech
Fr. Columba Kelly, OSB, has set the text of the Lectionary (second typical edition) to the ancient tone for this proclamation. The tone has been carefully adapted for the rhythm and accentuation of the English language. Care should be taken to preserve the natural English rhythm of the text. The notes are not of equal value. Rather they should reflect the length and intensity of the English accent. The singers should read through the text out loud and determine how they would proclaim the text orally. Having made that judgment, they can then add the music. This type of music is sung speech in which the music serves the text.

Division into Scenes
The text has been divided into eighteen scenes in order to assist the singers when practicing and proclaiming the Passion.

The Characters
Traditionally the text is divided between three singers: the Christus, the Narrator, and the People.
This presentation also provides the possibility of further divisions in order to distribute the burden of singing among a larger group if that seems appropriate. The singing of the Passion takes about twenty-five minutes. Practicalities may dictate that part be read and part be sung. The sections for the duos, trios, and the crowd may be sung in unison, but where there are resources, these sections should be sung in harmony.
The narrator’s role has been divided between Narrator 1 and Narrator 2. The largest burden is still borne by Narrator 1, but the scenes of Peter’s denial as well as the dialogues between Christ and Pilate are given to Narrator 2.
The other characters are divided out as indicated by the text with a few passages for duos and trios. As is clear from the text, Pilate is a major character in the Passion of John, and there is a real advantage to making him, at least, a separate voice.
The characters are as follows:

- The Christus, designated in the music by the Cross: ✽
- The Narrator
  - Narrator 1, designated in the music as N1
  - Narrator 2, designated in the music as N2
- The People
  - Pilate (fifteen times)
  - Peter (twice)
  - Maid (once)
  - Trio of accusers (twice)
  - Trio of soldiers (once)
  - Slave (once)
  - Guard (once)
  - Duo of High Priests (twice)
  - The Crowd (nine times)

The Presentation
The sung proclamation of the Passion is not meant to be a realistic presentation of the action. Still the words of the text should communicate the vitality and the mystery of the Lord’s Passion and Death. An over-wrought presentation calls attention to itself instead of the text while a tepid approach belies the power of the words. The proclamation need only reveal the power of the words.

Harry Hagan, OSB
Saint Meinrad Archabbey
# The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

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A compact disc recording is available from the publisher, edition 20016.
The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John

John 18:1—19:42

Columba Kelly, OSB

1. Betrayal in the Garden

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered.

Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them,
"Whom are you looking for?"

They answered him,

"Jesus the Nazorean."

He said to them,

"I AM."

Judas his betrayer was also with them.

When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them,

*Harmonized choruses, indicated by rehearsal letters, begin on p. 38.
“Whom are you looking for?”

They said, "Jesus the Nazorean."

Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me."

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear."
The slave's name was Mal - chus. Je - sus said to Pe - ter,

"Put your sword in - to its scab - bard. Shall I not____
drink____ the cup that the Fa - ther gave____ me?"

2. Jesus before Annas

N1: So the band of sol - diers, the tri - bune, and the Jew - ish guards

seized____ Je - sus, bound him, and brought him to An - nas first.____

He was the fa - ther-in - law of Cai - a - phas, who was high priest that year.____

It was Cai - a - phas who had coun - seled the Jews that it was bet - ter

that one man should die rath - er than the peo - ple.

Edition #20042
N2: Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus.

Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus.

But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter,
Maid: “You are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?”

N2: He said.

Peter: “I am not.”

N2: Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.”
N1: The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him,

“I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing.

Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them.

They know what I said.”
When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?"

Guard: "Is this the way you answer the high priest?"

Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.
5. Peter’s Second Denial

N2: Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm.

And they said to him,

Trio: “You are not one of his disciples, are you?”

N2: He denied it and said,

Peter: “I am not.”

N2: One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said,

Slave: “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?”

N2: Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.
Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium.

It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover.

So Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

They answered and said to him, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."
At this, Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law."

The Jews answered him, "We do not have the right to execute anyone," in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die.
7. Pilate and Jesus

N2: So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him,

Pilate: “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?”

Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?”
N2: Jesus answered,

“My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.”

Pilate: “Then you are a king?”

N2: Jesus answered,
"You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate: "What is truth?"
When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them,

Pilate: “I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

They cried out again, “Not this one but Barabbas!”

Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.
9. Jesus and the Soldiers

N1: Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged.

And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head,

and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said,

Trio: “Hail, King of the Jews!”

N1: And they struck him repeatedly.
10. Pilate and the People

N1: Once more Pilate went out and said to them,

Pilate: “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know

that I find no guilt in him.”

N1: So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak.

And he said to them,

Pilate: “Behold, ___ the man!”

N1: When the chief priests and the guards ___ saw him they cried ___ out,

Crowd: “Crucify him, crucify him!”
Pilate said to them, 

"Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him."

The Jews answered, 

"We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

Preview
Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,

Pilate: “Where are you from?”

Jesus did not answer him. So Pilate said to him,

Pilate: “Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?”

Jesus answered him,
“You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”
Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out, “If you release him, you are not a Friend of Caesar.

Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”

When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pave-ment, in Hebrew, Gab-ba-tha. It was preparation day for Pass-o-ver, and it was about noon.

And he said to the Jews,
Pilate: “Be - hold,____ your king!”

N1: They cried____ out,____

Crowd: “Take him a - way, take him a - way! Cru - ci - fy him!”

N1: Pi - late said to them,

Pilate: “Shall I cru - ci - fy your king?”

N1: The chief priests____ an - swered,

Duo: “We have no____ king but Cae - sar.”

N1: Then he hand - ed him o - ver to them to be cru - ci - fied.
So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.”

Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city;
and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,

Duo: “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that he said,

‘I am the King of the Jews.’”

N1: Pilate answered,

Pilate: “What I have written, I have written.”

14. The Soldiers Divide Jesus’ Clothing

N1: When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes

and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier.
This is what the soldiers did.

They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seam-less, woven in one piece from the top down.

So they said to one another,

Trio: “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,”

N1: in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says:

N2: They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.

N1: This is what the soldiers did.
15. Jesus and His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

N2: Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother

and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,

and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother

and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother,

* "Woman, behold, your son."

N2: Then he said to the disciple,

* "Behold, your mother."

N2: And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.
After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.”

There was a vessel filled with common wine.

So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hysop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said,
“It is finished.”

N1: And bowing his head, he handed over

the spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short period of time.
Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately...
blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified,

and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth,

so that you also may come to believe.

For this happened so that the Scripture passage

might be fulfilled:

N2: Not a bone of it will be broken.

N1: And another passage says:

N2: They will look upon him whom they have pierced.
After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus.

And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body.

Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom.
Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden,
and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried.

So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day;
for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.
After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices,
according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden,
and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.
1. Betrayal in the Garden

They answered him.

They answered him.

Jesus the Nazorean.
N1: He said to them,
   “I AM.”
N1: Judas his betrayer was also with them.
   When he said to them, “I AM,”
   they turned away and fell to the ground.
   So he again asked them,
   “Whom are you looking for?”

With awe

They said, “Jesus the Nazorean.”
Jesus answered,

“I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”

This was to fulfill what he had said,

“I have not lost any of those you gave me.”

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter,

“Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?”

2. Jesus before Annas

So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

3. Peter’s Denial

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter,

Maid: “You are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?”

Peter: “I am not.”

Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

4. Jesus before Caiaphas

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him,

“I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.”
When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said,

Guard: “Is this the way you answer the high priest?”

Jesus answered him,

“If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”

Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

5. Peter’s Second Denial

Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm.

He denied it and said,

Peter: “I am not.”

One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said,

Slave: “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?”

Again Peter denied it.

And immediately the cock crowed.

6. Pilate and the People

Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium.

It was morning.

And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover.

So Pilate came out to them and said,

Pilate: “What charge do you bring against this man?”
At this, Pilate said to them,

Pilate: “Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.”

in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled

that he said indicating the kind of death he would die.

7. Pilate and Jesus

So Pilate went back into the praetorium
and summoned Jesus and said to him,

Pilate: “Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered,

“Do you say this on your own
or have others told you about me?”

Pilate answered,
Pilate: "I am not a Jew, am I? 
Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. 
What have you done?"

N2: Jesus answered, 
/> “My kingdom does not belong to this world. 
If my kingdom did belong to this world, 
my attendants would be fighting 
to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. 
But as it is, my kingdom is not here.”

N2: So Pilate said to him, 
Pilate: "Then you are a king?"

N2: Jesus answered, 
/> “You say I am a king. 
For this I was born and for this I came into the world, 
to testify to the truth. 
Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

N2: Pilate said to him, 
Pilate: "What is truth?"

8. Pilate and the People

N1: When he had said this, 
he again went out to the Jews and said to them, 
Pilate: "I find no guilt in him. 
But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. 
Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

N1: Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.
9. Jesus and the Soldiers

N1: Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak,

And they came to him and said,"

Sarcastically

"Hail, King of the Jews!"

N1: And they struck him repeatedly.

10. Pilate and the People

N1: Once more Pilate went out and said to them,

Pilate: "Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him."

N1: So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them,

Pilate: "Behold, the man!"

N1: When the chief priests and the guards saw him

they cried out,"

and they came to him and said,"

"Hail, King of the Jews!"
N1: Pilate said to them,
Pilate: “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.”

N1: The Jews answered,
The Jews answered.

S

“A crucify him, crucify him!”

A

“A crucify him, crucify him!”

B

“A crucify him, crucify him!”

We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

B

“We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

B

“We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”
11. Jesus and Pilate

N2: Now when Pilate heard this statement,
he became even more afraid,
and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,
Pilate: "Where are you from?"
N2: Jesus did not answer him.
So Pilate said to him,
Pilate: "Do you not speak to me?
Do you not know that I have power to release you
and I have power to crucify you?"
N2: Jesus answered him,
♫ "You would have no power over me
if it had not been given to you from above.
For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

12. Pilate and the People

N1: Consequently, Pilate tried to release him:

"If you re - lease him, you are not a Friend of Caes - sar.
Ev - ery - one who makes him - self a king op - po - ses Caes - sar."

"If you re - lease him, you are not a Friend of Caes - sar.
Ev - ery - one who makes him - self a king op - po - ses Caes - sar."

"If you re - lease him, you are not a Friend of Caes - sar.
Ev - ery - one who makes him - self a king op - po - ses Caes - sar."
When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews,

Pilate: “Behold, your king!”

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Pilate said to them,

Pilate: “Shall I crucify your king?”

Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

The chief priests answered,

The chief priests answered,

They cried out,

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13. The Crucifixion

N1: So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read,

N2: “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.”

N1: Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek.

N1: Pilate answered,

Pilate: “What I have written, I have written.”

14. The Soldiers Divide Jesus’ Clothing

N1: When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.
in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says:

They divided my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.

This is what the soldiers did.

15. Jesus and His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother
and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary of Magdala.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved
he said to his mother,

“Woman, behold, your son.”

Then he said to the disciple,

“Behold, your mother.”

And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.
16. The Death

N1: After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.”

N1: There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.”

N1: And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

17. The Fulfillment of the Scriptures

N1: Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe. For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled:

N2: Not a bone of it will be broken.

N1: And again another passage says:

N2: They will look upon him whom they have pierced.

18. The Burial

N1: After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.
18. The Burial

S/A

Baritone
Solo

B

in strict time;
choral breathing

in strict time;
choral breathing

as freely as possible

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And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred...
They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom.

Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and...
in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.