

the ages. No story appeals to man's finer creative vision as does the life of Christ. The early Christian chants, the masses of Palestrina, the passions, oratorios, masses of Bach, Handel, Beethoven—among many others—are the musical panorama of the mute majesty of the life of God on earth. With never diminishing radiance, to every succeeding generation of humanity this panorama gives life, spiritual consciousness, to each in his own measures. It is small wonder that in his turn the Aframerican should find in his musical portraying of the life of Christ, his most effective utterance. A social condition of the most abject humility could not help but find complete identity in a life of love, compassion, and patience.

'Unity Concert' Program

The Tablet, *the newspaper of the Brooklyn Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, published the following notice on Jan. 11, under the title, "Co-Cathedral to Host Unity Concert Honoring Dr. King."*

The Foundation for the Revival of Classical Culture and the Schiller Institute will conduct a "Unity Concert" entitled "Strength to Love" to commemorate the birthday of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Jan. 15, at 4 p.m. at St. Joseph's Co-Cathedral, Prospect Heights.

"In this time of division in our country, a certain trumpet for unity should be sounded. The language of music is an excellent way to sound that trumpet," said Lynne Speed, of The Schiller Institute.

The concert will feature the "Life of Christ" song cycle composed by Roland Hayes. The program will also include a soloist from the NYPD Ceremonial Unit singing "God Bless America," three African American spirituals and the "Amen" Chorus from Handel's *Messiah* (Dr. King's favorite piece), performed by the Schiller Institute NY Community Chorus.

Guest soloists will perform selections from works of Schubert, Bach and Verdi. Special guest artists include: Indira Mahajan, Everett Suttle, Reginald Bouknight, Frank Mathis, Gudrun Buhler, Elvira Green, and

Gregory Hopkins. Conductors are Diane Sare and John Sigerson, who conducted the historic Mozart *Requiem* at the Co-Cathedral of St. Joseph on the 15th anniversary commemoration of 9-11.

Music has long been at the center of the African-American struggle for freedom in the 17th- and 18th-century American colonies, as well as in the later United States. "Freedom songs" were not merely composed by African-Americans confined in slavery, but also by free churchmen associated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Even before the founding of those churches in 1794 and 1821, respectively, African-American clergymen heading churches in Florida, Virginia, South Carolina, and elsewhere composed songs. Literacy training existed, including of slaves, as early as 1634 in Quebec, carried out by Jesuit instructors such as Paul Le Jeanne, and the 1640s in Pennsylvania, carried out by the Moravians. The use in the 1960s civil rights movement of "freedom songs" was a central weapon employed to "overcome them with our capacity to love," as King once stated.

"Public service through public action" was the most enduring lesson of Dr. King. Among his early associates, nearly all of whom were clergymen, there had been a debate—"Why are you always talking about the 'Social' gospel," and not the 'Gospel' gospel?" King was often criticized by other clergymen and church institutions.

When he was denounced as "an outside agitator" in Birmingham, Ala., in April of 1963, King, then incarcerated at Birmingham jail, responded, "I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their 'thus saith the Lord' far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid."

It is often forgotten that the King-associated civil rights movement was not a political movement. It was a religiously based crusade for human dignity and justice that was punctuated by non-violent direct action.