Give Us a Voice

Meter: 11 11 11 5

When children wake to tears instead of laughter, or find abuse when seeking arms of shelter, give us a voice that cries out for the voiceless: your cry of healing.

When creatures tremble, frightened and bewildered, robbed of their homelands, cramped or caged or slaughtered, give us a voice that cries out for the voiceless: your cry of caring.

When hateful words spread falsehood and derision, and noxious fears exhale their clouds of poison, give us a voice that cries out for the voiceless: your cry for justice.

Christ who still grieves the fall of ev’ry sparrow, who beckons children, bids the outcast follow, give us your voice that cries out for the voiceless: your heart’s compassion.

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Howard Helvey sent me a deeply moving tune in the summer of 2005. I had been thinking about reasons why we sing in worship, realizing that one less-often acknowledged reason is that we may give a voice to those who are otherwise voiceless. This led me to think about “voiceless” ones in our own society: children, nonhuman animals, and those who are so marginalized by societal prejudice that what voice they do have cannot be heard over the din of bigotry and derision.
laugh - ter, or find a - buse when seek - ing arms of
wil - dered, robbed of their home - lands, cramped or caged or
ri - sion, and nox - ious fears ex - hale their clouds of
spar - row, who beck - ons chil - dren, bids the out - cast

shel - ter, give us a voice that cries out for the
slaugh - tered, give us a voice that cries out for the
poi - son, give us a voice that cries out for the
fol - low, give us your voice that cries out for the

voice - less: your cry of heal - ing.
voice - less: your cry of car - ing.
voice - less: your cry for jus - tice.
voice - less: your heart’s com - pas - sion.

Tune: ISTE CONFESSOR; Rouen Church Melody; Setting by Carl F. Schalk, b.1929, © 1961, Concordia Publishing House.
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