

## *An Intentional Fast in Our Repertoire*

In mid-June, the national community of Catholic music ministry directors became aware of several allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct in ministerial settings against the liturgical composer David Haas. You can read more from the [Catholic News Agency](#), [SNAP](#), [National Catholic Reporter](#), [America Magazine](#), and the [New York Times](#).

Haas' songs have become close to many of our hearts at pivotal moments in our lives of faith. Knowing how beloved his songs are in prayer, the music ministry community has continued discussion on several questions. Is it ethical to continue supporting the composer through royalties by using his music? Can the music draw our community into prayer given its current context, especially our members who have experienced similar trauma? How does our community of faith stand in solidarity with survivors of sexual harassment and sexual assault, especially with those who have broken the culture of silence around these experiences?

After praying about this and speaking with members of the national community of music ministers, the St. John's music ministry community, parish staff, and Creighton's Violence Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Center, I invite our community into a time of lamentation and solidarity. The news of this liturgical composer's abuse of power and position invites us to stand with anyone who has felt objectified or who has experienced trauma, especially in a religious setting. These survivors are the present and future members of our parish and university community, whether they have spoken out or not. With this intention of solidarity, I invite us to fast from Haas' music at liturgies, to let some of our beloved songs be silent for a time as a sign that we stand with those who have been silent or silenced.

We don't worship the means by which we pray: the particular songs, their composers, or these days the camera mediating our livestreamed virtual gatherings. These all help us worship God, to whom we pray. Yet, the songs and styles which carry our prayer contribute to our public identity as a Catholic community and can let others know who is welcome. To this end, if I introduce any *new* songs during this year already full of unfamiliar territory, I intend to prioritize sacred music created by women and composers of color.

Let us continue to pray for the healing of those who carry trauma, for the conversion of those who have perpetrated abuse, and for compassion and courage in our own community as we continue to grow in humility and walk in discipleship.

Sincerely,

**Molly Mattingly**

[mollymattingly@creighton.edu](mailto:mollymattingly@creighton.edu)

Director of Music Ministry, St. John's Parish and Creighton University Campus Ministry

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