REFRAIN: All

Reverently ($\dot{c}$ = ca. 70)

Sacramentum Caritatis:

Assembly, Cantors, SATB Choir, and Piano

Michael Joncas

Piano

Melody

Strong and with nobility

ca - ri - tá - is: pa - nis vi - vas _ et vi - tú - lis. Ca - lix no - vi

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From the collection O GOD OF PAST AND PRESENT Octavo Packet #20611 Compact Disc #20612

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Edition #20616
VERSE 1: Male Cantors

1. You fed your people on their journey to the land of promise:

(Dómini).

1. Manna in the desert, Water in the waste-land, And now you feed your people on the
1. flesh and blood of Jesus: Sacramentum caritatis.

REFRAIN: All

Soprano/Alto

Tenor/Bass

pænis vivus et vitalis. Calix novi testamenti:
VERSE 2: Female Cantors

2. You

dó - mi - ni, do - num Chri - sti, dó - mi - ni.

(Cantor I)

2. led your flock to pastures rich by streams of living water, Spread a feast before them,

(Cantor II) (Both)

2. Lavish with your bounty And now you bid your people feast with Jesus, Host and Shepherd:
2. Sacramentum caritatis.

REFRAIN: All

S

mf

A

Sacramentum caritatis: panis vivus et vitallis.

T/B (Melody)

mf

Ca-lix novi testamenti: donum Christi Domini.
VERSE 3: Male Cantors

mp

3. With bread and wine Mel-chi-ze-dek blessed

do-num Chri-sti Dó-mi-ni.

Sacramentum Caritatis

(Cantor I)

(Cantor II)

(Both)

3. A-bra-ham, your ser-vant, Fa-ther to the na-tions, Faith-ful to your prom-ise; With

car-i-tá-tis: pa-nis vi-vus et vi-tá-lis.

3. bread and wine you bless us now and fill us with your Spir-it: Sa-cra-mén-tum ca-

Ca-líx no-vi tes-ta-mén-ti: do-num Chri-sti

Sacramentum Caritatis
REFRAIN: All

Sa·cra·mén·tum ca·ri·tá·tis: pa·nis vi·vus et vi·tá·lis.

Ca·lis no·vi tes·ta·mén·ti: do·num Chri·sti Dó·mi·ni.
VERSE 4: Female Cantors

4. The night before he suffered death, Christ

do - num Chri - sti  Dò - mi - ni.  Sa - cra - mén - tum

4. gath - ered his dis - ci - ples,  Knelt be - fore them hum - bly,  Washed their feet as ser - vant;  What

4. Christ has done for us now grant us grace to do for others: Sacramentum caritatis

Ca - lix no - vi tes - ta-mén - ti: do - num Chri - sti

Dó - mi - ni.
REFRAIN: All

Sacramentum Caritatis

S
A
T
B
∑ œ œ œ œ

Ca - lix no - vi tes - ta - mén - ti: do - num Chri - sti

Ca - lix no - vi tes - ta - mén - ti: do - num
VERSE 5:
Male & Female Cantors

5. This

(Assembly melody in lower octave)

Chri - sti Dó - mi - ni, do - num Chri - sti Dó mi - ni.

Dó - mi - ni, do - num Chri - sti Dó mi - ni.

Chri - sti Dó - mi - ni, do - num Chri - sti Dó mi - ni.

Dó - mi - ni, do - num Chri - sti Dó mi - ni.
5. sacrament of love recalls the saving death of Jesus, Fills us with his presence,

(Cantor I)

5. Mani-fests his fu-ture; We pray: when days are done give us a place at heav-en’s ban-quet:

(Cantor II)  (Both)
5. Sacramentum caritatis

do num Christi Domini.

REFRAIN: All
(Unison)

Sacramentum caritatis: panis vivus et vitalis.
Composer Notes

Circumstances of Composition: Inspired by Benedict XVI’s post-synodal apostolic exhortation of the same name issued 22 February 2007, “Sacramentum Caritatis” was originally written to serve as a Thanksgiving chant after Communion in which the gathered community would reflect about the great gift of the Eucharist. My original idea was that the “Sacramentum Caritatis” quatrain would serve as a Taizé-style ostinato, with the choir gradually adding harmonies as this refrain was repeated. Soon, however, it became clear that the presumed ostinato could serve as a refrain for a Communion processional, and that I would craft vernacular verses that could be sung over the ostinato pattern.

Textual Issues: In creating the lyrics, I first settled on the Latin quatrain that forms the Refrain. I chose to write it using medieval poetic style, employing accentual (rather than quantitative) meter and end-rhymes:

Sacramentum caritatis: The sacrament of love;
Panis vivus et vitalis, Living and life-giving bread,
Calix novi testamenti, Chalice of the new covenant,
Donum Christi Domini. Gift of Christ the Lord.

The verses are addressed to God the Father and evidence progress of thought, from the types of the eucharistic mystery found during the Exodus (verse 1), in Psalm 23 (verse 2), and in the Genesis account of the ministry of Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem (verse 3), to the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper (verse 4), and its present celebration with past, present, and future dimensions (verse 5).

Musical Issues: In keeping with its character as a processional, “Sacramentum Caritatis” should be sung at a walking pace, its meter kept almost metronomic so that it facilitates the movement of communicants. While I believe the piece should be sung in its integrity with the different choral elaborations I have provided for each re-appearance of the refrain, it is possible to choose a single choral harmonization to be used each time the refrain appears. Likewise, it is possible for a single cantor to sing the verses, but dividing the melody between two cantors helps with breath control and emphasizes the climax with two chords of harmony.

Pastoral Issues: “Sacramentum Caritatis” is intended to be sung by assembly, cantor(s) and choir during the distribution of holy Communion at Mass. As such, it should be begun immediately when the priest receives the consecrated elements and should last as long as motion still occurs. It might make the most sense to have the choir members receive Communion at the very beginning of the piece since they can memorize the refrain and sing it in unison. It could appropriately be sung on Holy Thursday, on the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Lord, and during votive Masses highlighting the gift of the Eucharist. It might also find a place in catechesis on the mystery of the Eucharist, whether for the elect or for children preparing for first Communion. It might be sung during Exposition, Adoration, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

—Michael Joncas
Assembly Edition

SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS

Michael Joncas

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Refrain


Ca - lix no-vi tes-ta-ménti: do-num Chri-sti Dó-mi-ni,


Verses: Cantor

1. You fed your people on their journey to the land of promise:
   Manna in the desert, Water in the wasteland,
   And now you feed your people on the flesh and blood of Jesus:
   Sacraméntum caritátis.

2. You led your flock to pastures rich by streams of living water,
   Spread a feast before them, Lavish with your bounty,
   And now you bid your people feast with Jesus, Host and Shepherd:
   Sacraméntum caritátis.

3. With bread and wine Melchizedek blessed Abraham, your servant,
   Father to the nations, Faithful to your promise;
   With bread and wine you bless us now and fill us with your Spirit:
   Sacraméntum caritátis.

4. The night before he suffered death, Christ gathered his disciples,
   Knelt before them humbly, Washed their feet as servant;
   What Christ has done for us now grant us grace to do for others:
   Sacraméntum caritátis.

5. This sacrament of love recalls the saving death of Jesus,
   Fills us with his presence, Manifests his future;
   We pray: when days are done give us a place at heaven’s banquet:
   Sacraméntum caritátis.

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