Mater Ecclesiae
(Mother of the Church)
Ricky Manalo, CSP

FROM THE COLLECTION
On This Day
Choral Songbook #12015
CD #12016
Mater Ecclesiae
(*Mother of the Church*)

Ricky Manalo, CSP

VERSES Tenderly ($= ca. 116$)

Melody

Harmony

4. With Mary we sing
5. With Mary proclaim
6. With Mary rejoice

REFRAIN/OSTINATO

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Keyboard

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1-6. God.

4-5. ___________ to our God.

6. ___________ in our God.

O ___________ Marí - a.

Ab/C Dbs/F Eb/G Eb
1. To God, the Creator of all:
2. Through Jesus, our life and our hope:
3. In God’s Holy Spirit it:
4. To God be glory and praise:
5. Through Jesus, our Saving Lord:
6. In God’s Living Spirit it:

Mater Ecclesiae

Bm Eb/G A∅ Eb/G Fm7
1-6. receive our prayer.

4-6. receive our prayer.

pray with us this day.

D♭ Eb Eb4 Ab B♭m7/A♭

Final rit.
Mater Ecclesiae
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REFRAIN/OSTINATO Tenderly (♩ = ca. 116)

Capo 1:  (G)  (Cadd9/G)  (Gmaj7)  (C/G)  (G)

VERSES  (G/B)  (C/E)  (D/F♯)  (D)  (Em7)

1. With Mary we pray to our God.
2. With Mary we ask of our God.
3. With Mary we give praise to our God.
4. With Mary we sing to our God.
5. With Mary we proclaim to our God.
6. With Mary we rejoice in our God.

O Master Ecclesiae,

1-6. In God's living Spirit it.

1. Through Jesus, our Creator of all;
2. Through Jesus, our life and our hope;
3. In God's Holy Spirit it;
4. To God be glory and praise;
5. Through Jesus, our saving Lord;
6. In God's living Spirit it;

pray with us this day.

1-5 Final (G)  (Am7/G)  (Bm7/Ab)

1-6. receive our prayer. 6. prayer.

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Composer Notes

During my studies at the Washington Theological Union, I was fortunate to have taken a course on Mariology taught by theologian and School Sister of Notre Dame Mary Maher. We examined the history of Mariology, from its Scriptural foundations to a Rahnerian (theologian Karl Rahner) and Post–Vatican II perspective. Though the melody to this ostinato is very simple, the words and theology are rooted in a contemporary understanding of Mary; *Mater Ecclesiae* is essentially a Marian song from a specifically Vatican II perspective, which, from my experience, is the first of its kind.

Before Vatican II, our theology of Mary was more dependent upon doctrine than Scripture. Mariology was non-historical, since it did not have any appeal to historical studies. The image of Mary was seen as Christo-typical, that is, Mary was viewed as being joined with Christ, both of whom were facing the rest of the church: i.e., Mary as “Co-Redemptorist.” With the emphasis on her privileges, Mary was on the side of Christ, isolated from the rest of the church.

Not surprising, at Vatican II the focus became ecclesial-typical: Mary is seen as a type of church, now joined with the church, and together, with the rest of the church, facing Christ. Christ, in this Vatican II perspective, is better understood as the sole mediator (our theology of Mary becomes more Christo-centric, rather than Christo-typical). Of equal importance was the use of Scripture as a foundation for our theologizing about Mary.

The closest vote that occurred during the conciliar sessions was whether or not the document on Mary should be a separate document or included within another document, namely, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* (LG). With the vote of 1114 to 1074, it was agreed that Mary should be “with the church” and within the Pastoral Constitution, and not in a separated document. She is given the title: Mary, the Mother of the Church (LG #53). The title to the chapter reads “The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church.” This title now firmly situates her within what God is doing in history. No longer is she isolated from the rest of the church. Rather, all that we say about Mary is relative to the redemption of Christ. As professor Maher reminded us, when we get right to it, Mary is on the side of the human, not divine (LG #60). Mary’s mediation never gets in the way of Christ’s mediation, but always enhances it.

Once we understand this theology, we can more fully understand the text of this piece. The text of the assembly ostinato places Mary praying with and in the midst of the gathered assembly. This is not to strip away any of the privileges that Mary had received throughout her life. The theme of this song, after all, centers around her role as Mother of the Church. The cantors who sing the descants simultaneously evoke a Trinitarian theology of intercessory prayer: to God, through Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. While this piece was specifically written for the Solemnity of the Assumption (August 15), its theology should be welcomed during all rituals that wish to promote a Vatican II Mariology.

—Ricky Manalo, CSP
MATER ECCLESIAE
(MOTHER OF THE CHURCH)

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Verses: Cantor

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   receive our prayer.

4. With Mary we sing to our God.
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5. With Mary proclaim to our God.
   Through Jesus, our Saving Lord:
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6. With Mary rejoice in our God.
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